

Christmas

HEAVEN

2015

101
FESTIVE
RECIPES

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in style**

Get the party
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classic bakes
and puddings

*Perfect
presents!*

Whip up edible bakes
for all your loved ones...

- 🍷 **Gingerbread truffles**
- 🍷 **Hot cocoa reindeer**
- 🍷 **Spiced panettone**

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2015
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8 Creative Ideas For Christmas



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Welcome...



It's that time of year again folks and I for one am as excited as ever! Sure, the summer was great and yes, Easter always offers that promise of spring and a few bank holidays, but nothing ever comes close to Christmas. Just saying the word makes you think of friends, family gatherings, family embarrassments, great nights out, recovering nights in, log fires, the hope of snow or just the enjoyment of putting a smile on someone's face. But for some, and I confess to fall into this bracket, it's the allure of fantastic seasonal food that curves my mouth upwards. And, because it's Christmas, we can eat what we want and when we want it – that's my *modus operandi* anyway!

We have plenty for you to choose from in this issue as well. From fabulous Christmas bakes and wonderful puddings, to family treats and festive drinks, there is something for everyone. We have some lovely ideas for foodie gifts to wow your loved ones and some adorable biscuits to brighten up the little person in you. If you are stuck for ideas as to what to put under the tree for a keen baking enthusiast, turn to page 8 to find a selection of kitchen goodies perfect for the time of year.

Anyway, I hope you enjoy the magazine as much as we've enjoyed putting it together. All that's left to say is Merry Christmas everyone!

Nick

Nick Gregory Deputy Editor

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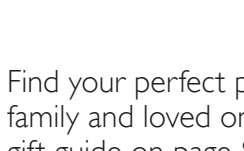
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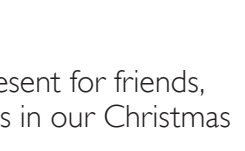
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Christmas HEAVEN



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Renshaw
Advertorial

IT'S THAT WONDERFUL TIME OF YEAR!

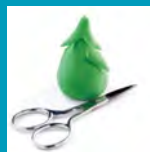
And it's a great excuse to have a little cake craft fun, so why not experiment with a big splash of colour.

From delightful Christmas cakes to teeny fun festive bakes, it's so easy with Ready to Roll icing and marzipans from Renshaw.

Why not try your hand at crafting a show-stopping festive table centrepiece, it's only a few simple steps away.

Decorate star-shaped biscuits in a variety of coloured icing and layer up to resemble a tree, in no time at all you have created something quite special. To ring the changes, and make the decorations extra tasty, colour up some natural marzipan with a drop of gel colouring and use this in place of the icing.

For more teeny bakes, little cake toppers are ideal. Simple snapped Christmas trees are easy to achieve just follow the steps below. Apply the same technique to cup cake tops and you too can create the tear and share Christmas cake featured in the advert.



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Christmas

GIFT GUIDE

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covering every budget that your
fellow baking fans will adore...



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**Kenwood
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Kenwood **£499**
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Cookie Cutter Set**

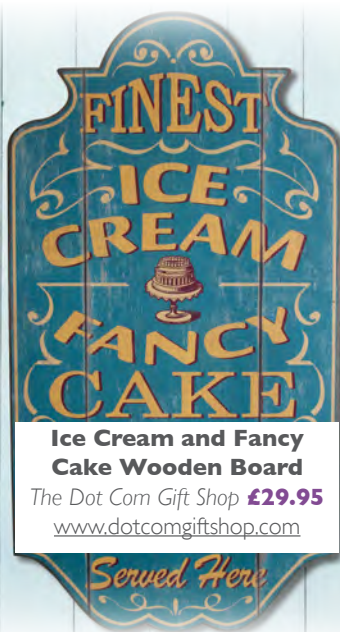
The Great British Bake Off
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The Baking Journal
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Christmas

BAKES



Chocolate hazelnut dacquoise with figs

By James Martin

Serves 8-10

FOR THE DACQUOISE

10 free-range egg whites

275g (10oz) caster sugar

50g (1¾oz) cocoa powder

250g (9oz) ground hazelnuts

FOR THE FILLING

750ml (26fl oz) double cream

1½ tbsp vanilla bean paste

75g (2¾oz) icing sugar

10-12 figs

TO DECORATE

twisted willow, or other decorative twigs

sugar spiral (optional)

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4 and line two baking sheets with silicone paper. Draw a 23cm (9in) circle on each sheet of paper, then flip them over.
- 2** Make sure your bowl and whisk are very clean, free of grease and dry, as any water or grease will affect the meringue.
- 3** Place the egg whites in the bowl and whisk with a food mixer or an electric whisk on high speed to soft peaks. Add the sugar, a spoonful at a time, whisking until the mixture is smooth and glossy.
- 4** Sift in the cocoa powder and whisk until combined. Fold in the ground hazelnuts, taking care not to knock the air out of the meringue. Spoon into a piping bag fitted with a 1cm (½in) plain nozzle. Lift the paper up and pipe four blobs on the corner of each tray, then press the paper to them to stop it moving.
- 5** Pipe concentric rings to fill the circle on each of the lined trays. Next, pipe six small discs around the trays (you will have some mixture left over). Bake for 15-20 minutes until golden and just firm to the touch. Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
- 6** Meanwhile, whisk the cream, vanilla bean paste and icing sugar together until you have firm peaks.
- 7** Place one of the meringue discs into a 23cm (9in) metal ring on a cake stand or serving plate, trimming it if necessary, then spread a layer of cream 1cm (½in) thick on top. Cut 10 figs in half from top to bottom. Place these upright into the cream around the edge of the ring, cut side facing out. Continue all the way around until you have made a border of figs around the edge of the cream. Fold the small discs of meringue into the remaining cream, along with 2 quartered figs. Pile the cream into the centre, pressing it lightly so that it holds the figs in place against the ring.
- 8** Place the second meringue disc on top, trimming if necessary, then press down lightly. Lift the ring off the dacquoise. To help you do this cleanly, warm the ring very quickly with a blow torch, or dip a cloth into hot water and run it around the ring.
- 9** Decorate with twisted willow and fig wedges, and a sugar spiral, if desired.



Recipe taken from
Sweet by James Martin,
photography by Peter
Cassidy, published by
Quadrille. (RRP £20).



Cinnamon-sugared blueberry bundt

By Shauna Sever

Makes one 25cm (10in) bundt cake

TO PREPARE THE PAN

50g (1½oz) pure cane sugar

¾ tsp ground cinnamon

FOR THE CAKE

190g (6¾oz) plain flour, spooned and leveled, plus 1 extra tsp for dusting

180g (6oz) whole wheat pastry flour, spooned and leveled

2½ tsp baking powder

½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

1 tsp sea salt

300g (10½oz) pure cane sugar

280g (9½oz) unsalted butter, at room temperature

2 tsp vanilla extract

4 large free-range eggs, at room temperature

360g (12½oz) buttermilk, at room temperature

210g (7½oz) frozen blueberries

- 1 Position a rack in the lower third of the oven and preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4.
- 2 Spray a 25cm (10in) bundt tin with non-stick cooking spray, hitting all the little dips and creases in the pan with spray.
- 3 In a small bowl, stir together the sugar and cinnamon. Sprinkle the cinnamon sugar all over the inside of the pan, turning it to coat as much surface area of the pan as possible.
- 4 For the cake, in a medium bowl, whisk together the flours, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and salt. Set aside.
- 5 In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat together the sugar and butter on medium-high speed for about 5 minutes until lightened in colour and fluffy. About 1 minute into the beating time, add the vanilla extract. Beat in the eggs one at a time, letting each one blend into the batter for about 30 seconds before adding the next.
- 6 Reduce the mixer speed to low and add about half the flour, mixing just until the flour begins to disappear. Add the buttermilk, mixing to incorporate. Add the rest of the flour and mix until there are a few streaks of flour left in the batter. Fold by hand several times with a large spatula until the batter is smooth.
- 7 Remove the blueberries from the freezer and divide in half. Place half the berries in a small bowl and toss with 1 tsp flour. Quickly and gently fold the floured berries into the batter and spread the batter into the prepared tin. Sprinkle the rest of the berries on top of the batter. Bake for about 1 hour until a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean. Cool completely in the tin on a wire rack. Invert the cake onto a serving platter. Store any leftovers in an airtight container or cake dome at room temperature for up to 3 days.



Recipe taken from
Real Sweet by Shauna
Sever, published by
HarperCollins.
(RRP £16.99).





Mince pies

By Lisa Roukin (www.myrelationshipwithfood.com)

Makes 12

FOR THE PASTRY

250g (9oz) plain flour, plus extra for rolling

125g (4½oz) unsalted salted butter, cubed

**75g (2¾oz) caster sugar
finely grated zest of 1 lemon**

1 tbsp lemon juice

1 medium free-range egg, beaten

**1 medium free-range egg yolk, beaten
a pinch of sea salt**

1 tbsp milk, for sealing and brushing

1 tbsp icing sugar, for dusting

FOR THE FILLING

350g (12oz) mincemeat, shop brought or homemade

- 1** Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6.
- 2** Sift the flour into a medium bowl and add the butter. Blend with your fingertips or food processor. Add the sugar, salt, lemon zest and juice and beaten egg until smooth.
- 3** Wrap in clingfilm, then refrigerate for 30-60 minutes.
- 4** Lightly dust the work surface with flour; roll out half of the dough into 12 rounds using a round 8cm (3in) cutter; then roll out 12 rounds using a fluted 7cm (2¾in) cutter.
- 5** Place the larger pastry rounds on the bottom of the holes of a non-stick 12-hole muffin tray, then add a spoonful of mincemeat. Taking a lid, brush with a little water around the edges and place it wet side down on top of the open mince pie. Seal the edges with your fingers.
- 6** Brush with milk, sprinkle with caster sugar and cook for 20-25 minutes until the pastry is golden brown.
- 7** Cool for 10 minutes before taking out gently. Sprinkle with icing sugar.



Plum Danish

By Richard Burr

Makes 8

INGREDIENTS

4 ripe plums, halved and stones removed

plain flour, to dust

1 free-range egg, lightly beaten

100g (3½oz) apricot jam

100g (3½oz) icing sugar

1 tbsp lemon juice

FOR THE DANISH PASTRY DOUGH

250g (9oz) strong white bread flour, plus extra to dust (optional)

250g (9oz) plain flour

1 tbsp fast-action yeast

2 tsp table salt

50g (1½oz) caster sugar

3 large free-range eggs

120ml (4fl oz) whole milk

250g (9oz) unsalted butter, chilled

FOR THE MARZIPAN

125g (4½oz) ground almonds

125g (4½oz) icing sugar, plus extra to dust

1 free-range egg white

½ tsp almond extract

a few drops of pink gel food colour

- 1** For the pastry dough, mix the flours, yeast, salt and sugar in a bowl, making sure you add the yeast and salt to opposite sides of the bowl. Add 2 of the eggs, 60ml (2fl oz) cold water and the milk and mix with a wooden spoon. If you have a stand mixer, mix on medium speed with a dough hook for 8 minutes. If you don't, you can still make these, but it takes a bit more work: mix on a floured work surface using a dough scraper to stretch out the dough, then your hands once it becomes less sticky, for 15-20 minutes until smooth and elastic. Wrap up the dough in clingfilm and put in the fridge for at least 1 hour.

- 2** Unwrap the chilled dough and roll out on a floured surface to 60x30cm (24x12in). Bash out the butter between two sheets of clingfilm to 40x20cm (16x8in). Regularly turn the butter and peel off and re-lay the clingfilm. Lay the butter on the dough so it covers two-thirds of the surface lengthways and also leaves a clear border around all the edges, then fold the exposed third of dough over half of the butter, pressing the edges to seal the butter in. Fold the final third of butter-covered dough over to get three layers of dough, separated by two layers of butter, pressing down the edges all round.
- 3** Turn the dough by 90 degrees and roll out again to 60x30cm (24x12in). Fold in thirds again to give nine layers of dough. Wrap in clingfilm and return to the fridge for 1 hour. Take out and roll out to 60x30cm (24x12in) and fold in thirds to get 27 layers, then turn through 90 degrees, roll out and fold to get 81 layers. Return to the fridge for at least 8 hours.
- 4** Roll out the chilled dough on a floured work surface to 60x30cm (24x12in) and cut it into eight squares of 15cm (6in). You may need to rest the dough halfway through for 10 minutes to allow you to roll it out far enough.
- 5** For the marzipan, put the ground almonds and icing sugar in a food processor and mix thoroughly. Add the egg white, almond extract and food colouring and mix well until all the ingredients come together. When the marzipan has formed, wrap in clingfilm to prevent it drying out.
- 6** Roll out the marzipan to a 16cm (6¼in) square and cut it into eight strips. To assemble the Danish, lay a marzipan strip diagonally on a dough square and add 4 plum pieces.
- 7** Using a little dab of water, stick the two opposite corners over the filling to form the Danish shape. Place on two baking sheets or trays lined with baking parchment, leaving enough room between them for the pastries to rise.
- 8** Cover each tray with a plastic bag – it should not touch the pastries but form a tent over them – and leave to rise for 1 hour, until doubled in size.
- 9** Preheat the oven to 220°C/Gas Mark 7. Liberally brush the Danish pastries with beaten egg and bake for 15-20 minutes.
- 10** Meanwhile, place the jam in a saucepan with 1 tbsp water and heat up over a low heat.
- 11** When the pastries are cooked, take out of the oven and set on a cooling rack. Paint the hot jam on to the pastries.
- 12** While these are cooling, make the icing by beating the icing sugar and the lemon juice together. Once smooth, transfer to a piping bag and pipe onto the cooled pastries.





This recipe and the cupcakes on page 18 are taken from *BIY; Bake it Yourself* by Richard Burr, published by Quadrille. (RRP £20).

Mincemeat cupcakes

By Richard Burr

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

60g (2oz) unsalted butter, softened

100g (3½oz) caster sugar

1 large free-range egg, lightly beaten

125ml (4½oz) whole milk

410g (14oz) mincemeat (shop bought or homemade)

200g (7oz) plain flour

3 tsp baking powder

FOR THE BUTTERCREAM

150g (5½oz) unsalted butter, softened

300g (10½oz) icing sugar

2 tbsp brandy

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4.
- 2 Beat the butter and sugar together with an electric whisk until light coloured and smooth. Thoroughly beat in the egg, then stir in the milk; the mixture will split here, but don't worry – it will come back when you put the flour in. Stir in the mincemeat to get a really sloppy-looking mixture.
- 3 Sift the flour and baking powder together and fold into the batter. This will make quite a wet mixture, but trust me, it'll turn out fine!
- 4 Place the cases in a 12-hole muffin tin and load each with 2 heaped tbsp batter; this should use it all up. Bake in the oven for 20 minutes, or until a cocktail stick comes out clean when inserted into the centre of a cake.
- 5 Once cooked, remove from the oven, take the cakes out of the muffin tin and set on a wire rack to cool. They must be fully cooled before the buttercream can go on, or it will melt.
- 6 Make the buttercream by beating the butter, icing sugar and brandy in a bowl with an electric whisk until fully combined and creamy.
- 7 Load the buttercream into a piping bag fitted with a large startipped nozzle, but do not put it in the fridge if you're not piping the cupcakes straight away or it will stiffen up too much to pipe. Pipe swirls of buttercream onto each cake: start on the outside and spiral your way in, leaving a point in the middle.





Black bun

By Paul Hollywood

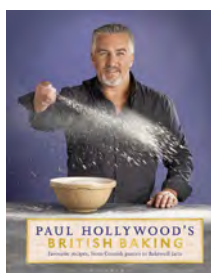
Makes a 900g (2lb) loaf

FOR THE HOT WATER PASTRY

450g (16oz) plain flour
100g (3½oz) strong white bread flour
75g (2¾oz) unsalted butter, diced
200ml (7fl oz) water
½ tsp salt
100g (3½oz) lard, diced
1 free-range egg, lightly beaten, to glaze

FOR THE FILLING

200g (7oz) plain flour
400g (14oz) raisins
200g (7oz) sultanas
½ tsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp ground allspice
½ tsp ground mixed spice
100g (3½oz) dark muscovado sugar
80g (2¾oz) almonds, chopped
50g (1¾oz) walnuts, chopped
½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
1 free-range egg
2 tbsp whisky
3 tbsp milk
grated zest of 1 orange and juice of ½ an orange



Recipe taken from *Paul Hollywood's British Baking*, by Paul Hollywood, photography by Peter Cassidy, published by Bloomsbury. (RRP £25).

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Grease a 900g (2lb) loaf tin with lard and line the base and ends with a long strip of baking parchment that overhangs the short ends. This makes it easier to remove the loaf after baking.
- 2 For the filling, mix all the ingredients together in a large bowl and set aside.
- 3 For the pastry, mix the flours together in a bowl and rub in the butter with your fingertips until the mix resembles fine breadcrumbs. Put the water, salt and lard in a saucepan and heat until the lard has melted and the water just comes to the boil. Pour it into the flour mixture and mix with a wooden spoon. Tip out onto a floured surface and knead briefly until smooth.
- 4 Cut off about a quarter of the pastry and set aside, keeping it covered with clingfilm. Roll out the remaining pastry to a 6-7mm (¼in) thickness – work as quickly as you can, as the pastry will become crumbly as it cools.
- 5 Line the loaf tin with the rolled-out pastry, pressing it gently into the corners and smoothing it out as necessary. Leave the excess pastry hanging over the edges of the tin. Spoon the filling inside and press down lightly.
- 6 Roll out the remaining pastry to fit the top of the tin. Dampen the edges with water, place it on top of the filling and press the edges together to seal. Trim away the excess pastry and crimp the edges. Make three slits in the top to allow steam to escape.
- 7 Brush the top with beaten egg and bake for 2 hours, covering the top loosely with foil after 1 hour or so if it becomes too dark. Leave to cool in the tin before turning out.



Panettone

By Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk)

Makes x

1 tsp vanilla extract
2 large free-range eggs and 5 free-range egg yolks, beaten together, plus 1 egg white to glaze
250g (9oz) unsalted butter, softened, plus extra to grease
100g (3½oz) golden caster sugar
grated zest of 1 large orange
grated zest of 1 lemon
4 tbsp milk
25g (1oz) fresh yeast
500g (1lb 1oz) strong white bread flour, plus extra to dust
1 tsp salt
a pinch of freshly ground nutmeg
a little oil, to grease
80g (2¾oz) raisins
80g (2¾oz) sultanas
3 tbsp golden rum
100g (3½oz) good-quality candied citrus peel, finely chopped
a little icing sugar, to dust

- 1** Add the vanilla extract to the beaten eggs and yolks. In a large bowl, beat the butter and all but 1 tsp sugar until light, thick and creamy. Gradually add the beaten egg mixture, whisking continuously (if the mix begins to split, add 1 tbsp strong bread flour). Add the orange and lemon zest.
- 2** Warm the milk in a pan until tepid, then pour into a small bowl. Crumble the yeast on top, then add the remaining sugar. Stir the yeast until it dissolves, then allow to stand for 5-10 minutes until the yeast activates and bubbles form on the surface.
- 3** Sift the flour, salt and nutmeg into a large bowl. Make a well in the centre, pour in the milky yeast and quickly mix through the flour. Add the egg mixture, folding in to make a soft, sticky dough.
- 4** Tip the dough onto a floured work surface and, with floured hands, knead for 10 minutes until silky and smooth. The dough will be very sticky at first, but will eventually come together as you keep working it (avoid adding extra flour as this will alter the final texture). Form into a ball, then place in a lightly oiled bowl and cover with clingfilm. Leave in a warm place (an airing cupboard is ideal) for 1½ hours or until doubled in size.
- 5** Meanwhile, put the raisins and sultanas in a small pan with the rum, bring to a simmer; stir well, then remove from the heat and leave to plump up as they cool. Grease the cake tin.
- 6** When the dough has risen, tip onto a floured surface. Knead for a minute, then begin to knead in the raisins, sultanas and candied peel until evenly distributed, discard the rum. Form the dough into a smooth ball and place it into the cake pan. Cover loosely with clingfilm and leave in a warm place for 2 hours until the dough has tripled in size.
- 7** Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6.
- 8** When the dough has risen, brush the top of the panettone with egg white. Wrap a double layer of brown paper around the outside of the cake pan, high enough so it extends 10cm (4in) above the top of the tin. Secure with kitchen string.
- 9** Place the cake pan on a baking sheet and bake for 15 minutes, then reduce the temperature to 180°C/Gas Mark 4 and bake for a further 30-35 minutes (you may need to cover the top with foil after 20 minutes to prevent it browning too much). When ready, a skewer inserted in the centre will come out clean.
- 10** Cool in the tin for 5 minutes before turning out, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Lightly dust with icing sugar before cutting.





Christmas cookie tree

By Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk)

Makes 24-30 cookies

600g (1lb 4oz) plain flour

300g (10½oz) cold butter, diced

300g (10½oz) caster sugar

2 small free-range eggs

1 tsp almond extract

1kg (2lb 2oz) white ready-to-roll icing

2 tbsp apricot jam, warmed

icing sugar, to dust

edible silver balls

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4.
- 2 Place the flour and butter into a food processor bowl with a dough blade, then process until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Add the sugar, eggs and extract. Mix until a ball of dough is formed. Divide into two equal balls, wrap in clingfilm and chill for 1 hour.
- 3 On a lightly floured surface, roll the balls of dough to about 5mm (¼in) thick. Stamp out two cookies in each size, dipping the cutters in flour before each use to prevent sticking.
- 4 Arrange on the baking trays, then bake for 10-12 minutes until firm and golden. Leave on the baking trays for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
- 5 On a surface lightly dusted with icing sugar, roll the icing to about 5mm (¼in) thick. Use the cookie cutters to stamp out two stars in each size.
- 6 Brush each cookie with a little jam and top with an icing star. Leave the iced cookies on a rack for a few hours, or until the icing has dried.
- 7 Stack your tree starting with the largest cookies at the bottom and smallest at the top. When you get to the top, roll a small ball of icing and use it to prop up the final star. Dust with icing sugar and decorate with silver balls.



Gluten-free star mince tarts

By Doves Farm (www.dovesfarm.co.uk)

Makes 24

200g (7oz) Doves Farm Plain White Flour Free From Gluten

100g (3½oz) butter

6 tbsp water

200g (7oz) gluten-free mincemeat

1 tbsp gluten-free apricot jam

- 1 Using a fork, mash the butter into the flour until it has the appearance of breadcrumbs. Stir in the water and bring together a soft ball of dough (it may appear a little wet, but will absorb the liquid). Wrap in clingfilm and rest the pastry for at least 30 minutes.
- 2 Grease two 12-hole muffin tins.
- 3 Roll out half the pastry between two pieces of floured clingfilm or parchment until about 1mm (⅛in) thick.
- 4 Press a pastry cutter or cup into the dough to make circles that fit tin, then gently lift them into the holes.
- 5 Put 1 tsp mincemeat into each tart.
- 6 Roll out the remaining pastry and cut out star shapes. Gently press these over the mincemeat, then bake in the oven for 25 minutes.
- 7 Remove from the oven and brush the stars with a little apricot jam, before cooking for a further 5 minutes.



Gluten-free Christmas ring cake

By Doves Farm

Makes a 20cm (8in) round cake

100g (3½oz) raisins
100g (3½oz) sultanas
100g (3½oz) currants
100g (3½oz) glacé cherries
100g (3½oz) mixed peel
100g (3½oz) dried cranberries
3 tbsp sherry or fruit juice
finely grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
150g (5½oz) butter
150g (5½oz) brown sugar
3 free-range eggs

200g (7oz) Doves Farm Plain Flour Free From Gluten
1 tsp mixed spice
1 tbsp water
TO DECORATE
300g (10½oz) satsumas
300g (10½oz) granulated sugar
water
200g (7oz) icing sugar
3 tbsp orange juice

- 1** Mix together the raisins, sultanas, currants, cherries, peel, cranberries, sherry, lemon zest and juice. Leave overnight to stand if possible.
- 2** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Cream together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy, then beat in the eggs. Mix in the flour and spice, followed by the water and prepared fruits.
- 3** Line a deep 20cm (8in) round cake tin with parchment. Cover the outside of a 10cm (4in) round cake tin with parchment and sit it inside the larger tin. Push the cake mixture into the space between the two tins. Bake in the oven for 2¼ hours, loosely covered with parchment.
- 4** Allow to cool in the tin for 12 hours before removing the tin.
- 5** To decorate and assemble the cake, put the sugar and water into a saucepan over a medium heat and stir until dissolved. Cut the satsuma into 5mm (¼in) slices, add them to the syrup. Cook gently for about 2 hours. Leave to cool in the syrup.
- 6** Drain the slices and lay them on a parchment lined baking tray. Bake in the oven for 20 minutes at 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Turn them over and bake for a further 20 minutes. Leave to cool.
- 7** For the icing, mix two spoonfuls of orange juice into the icing sugar, adding just enough of the remaining juice for the icing to flow. Drizzle it over the top of the cold cake. Press the satsuma slices on top of the icing.



Naked berry celebration cake

By Seasonal Berries (www.seasonalberries.co.uk)

Serves 16-20

FOR THE LEMON CAKES

400g (14oz) soft margarine

400g (14oz) caster sugar

finely grated zest of 2 lemons

7 medium free-range eggs

550g (1lb 4oz) self-raising flour

5 tbsp semi-skimmed milk

FOR THE LEMON DRIZZLE

juice of 2 lemons

150g (5oz) caster sugar

FOR THE FROSTING

100g (4oz) butter, at room temperature

350g (12oz) icing sugar

100g (4oz) lemon curd

75g (3oz) raspberries

TO DECORATE

400g (14oz) strawberries, halved if large

225g (8oz) raspberries

100g (4oz) blueberries

a little icing sugar, sifted

edible flowers, optional

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Cut long strips of non-stick baking paper a little taller than the sides of a cake tin. Fold up one of the long edges by 2cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in), then make small scissor snips up to the fold. Arrange the paper strips around the sides of a 20cm (8in) and a 13cm (5in) deep round cake tin with the snipped edges downwards, then add a circle of non-stick baking paper to the base of each cake tin.
- 2 Add the soft margarine, caster sugar and lemon zest to the bowl of an electric mixer and beat together until light and fluffy.
- 3 Add one egg and beat until smooth, add a second egg and a spoonful of flour and again beat until smooth. Gradually mix in all the remaining eggs and flour alternately until the cake mixture is smooth. Add the milk.
- 4 Divide the mixture between the two tins so that they are a similar depth, then smooth the surface and bake in the centre of the oven. Allow 50-60 minutes for the small cake and about 80 minutes for the larger cake until well risen, golden and a skewer comes out cleanly when inserted into the centre of the cake.
- 5 Meanwhile, mix the lemon juice and sugar together and set aside. Add all the frosting ingredients to the bowl of an electric mixer and beat together until smooth. Cover the bowl and chill until needed.
- 6 Allow each cake to cool for 5 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack set over a cooling rack so that the top is downwards. Peel away the lining paper and skewer what is now the top of the hot cake. Drizzle over the syrup and leave to cool.
- 7 When ready to assemble the cake, trim off the domed top if needed, then turn the cake back over so that the sticky syrupy base is now the top. Cut each cake into three layers with a serrated knife. Put the base layer on to a pedestal stand, spread with a little of the frosting, then layer up the two other larger cake layers with frosting. Spread the top of the cake with frosting, then add the base layer of the smaller cake and layer up the cake with frosting.
- 8 Insert three long plastic cake supports through the top of the cake down to the second cake to hold them in place. Trim off the top of the cake supports level with the cake.
- 9 Spread a layer of frosting on the top of the cake, then decorate the cake tiers and base of the pedestal stand with berries and dust with sifted icing sugar. Scatter with edible flower petals if using.



Triple berry Christmas cake

By Seasonal Berries (www.seasonalberries.co.uk)

Serves 12

CAKE

a little sunflower oil, for greasing

225g (8oz) soft margarine

225g (8oz) caster sugar

225g (8oz) self-raising flour

1 tsp baking powder

4 medium free-range eggs

finely grated zest of 1 lime

finely grated zest of 1 lemon

TO DECORATE

325g (11oz) jar of lemon curd

225g (8oz) raspberries, plus a few extra to decorate

400g (14oz) strawberries, thickly sliced, plus a few extra to decorate

150g (5oz) blueberries

450ml (16fl oz) double cream

100g (4oz) coconut shavings

a little icing sugar, sifted, to decorate

edible flowers, optional

- 1** For the cake, preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Brush the base and sides of two 20cm (8in) springform tins with a little oil. Line the base of each tin with a circle of non-stick baking paper.
- 2** Add the margarine, sugar, flour and baking powder to a large mixing bowl or food processor. Add the eggs and fruit zests and beat together for a few minutes until smooth.
- 3** Divide the cake mixture evenly between the two tins and level the surface with a knife. Bake for 20-25 minutes until the cakes are well risen, golden brown and the tops spring back when lightly pressed with a fingertip.
- 4** Leave the cakes to cool for 5 minutes, then loosen the edges. Remove from the tins and cool on a wire rack.
- 5** About 1-2 hours before you are ready to serve, remove the lining paper from the cakes if you haven't already, then cut each cake into two layers. Put one of the layers on a cake stand or flat plate.
- 6** Spread with some of the lemon curd, then arrange half the raspberries and strawberries in an even layer on top. Add a second cake layer, more lemon curd and the blueberries. Add a third cake layer, more lemon curd, then the remaining raspberries and strawberries. Cover with the final cake layer. Press together gently, checking that the cake stands straight.
- 7** Whisk the cream in a bowl until it forms soft swirls, then spread a thin layer over the top and sides of the cake to stick the cake crumbs in place. Spoon the remaining cream over and spread into soft swirls. Cover with the coconut shavings, then chill until ready to serve.
- 8** Add a few extra berries to the top of the cake, if desired. Dust lightly with sifted icing sugar just before serving.







Mincemeat slices

Serves 18

FOR THE PASTRY

250g (9oz) butter, softened
100g (3½oz) icing sugar, sifted
2 large free-range egg yolks
350g (12oz) plain flour, sifted, plus extra for dusting

FOR THE FILLING

400g (14oz) jar of mincemeat

FOR THE GLAZE

1 free-range egg white
25g (1oz) caster sugar

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Grease a 20x30cm (8x12in) baking tin.
- 2 For the pastry, cream together the butter and icing sugar in a large bowl until light and fluffy. Mix in the egg yolks and beat well. Add the flour to the mixture and bring together, firstly with a round ended knife, then with your hands to form a smooth paste.
- 3 Divide the mixture into two, wrap well in clingfilm, then place in the fridge to chill for 30 minutes. Remove from the fridge, then lightly dust your work surface with flour. Roll out one half of the mixture into a rectangle big enough to line the base and sides of the tin. If the pastry is breaking and difficult to handle, roll it out between two sheets of baking paper.
- 4 Line the base and sides of the tin with the pastry, then spoon the mincemeat on top. Spread out with the back of a spoon and level the top. Roll out the remaining pastry about the same size as the tin and place on top of the mincemeat. Pinch together the two layers of pastry to seal, trim the excess and flute the edges with your fingertips or a fork.
- 5 For the glaze, lightly beat the egg white with a fork to loosen. Brush on top of the pastry so it is well coated, then sprinkle the sugar evenly on top. Bake in the oven for 30-40 minutes until golden brown. Remove from the oven and allow to cool in the tin before cutting into slices.



Chestnut and orange syrup baklava

Makes 16

FOR THE BAKLAVA

350g (12oz) chestnuts, ready roasted and peeled
150g (5½oz) icing sugar
1 tsp ground cardamom
250g (9oz) filo pastry
150g (5½oz) butter, melted

FOR THE SYRUP

225g (8oz) sugar
150ml (5fl oz) water
grated zest and juice of 1 orange

- 1 Preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas Mark 3 and butter an 18x27cm (7x10in) baking tin. Chop up the chestnuts into very small pieces, then mix in a bowl with the icing sugar and cardamom.
- 2 Place one sheet of pastry inside the tin and brush with butter. Working with one sheet at a time and keeping the remainder covered with a damp tea towel, continue adding sheets of filo pastry and buttering each one until you have six layers.
- 3 Spread half the nut and icing sugar mixture over the top layer of pastry, pressing it down and levelling the top with the back of a spoon. Add another six sheets of pastry on top of the nut mixture as before, buttering each layer as you go.
- 4 Spread the remainder of the nut mixture on the top sheet of pastry, then add another six buttered sheets of pastry on top. Use a knife to cut the baklava into 16 small diamond shapes, but leave in the tin. Drizzle the remaining butter over the top. Bake for 20 minutes, then increase the temperature to 200°C/Gas Mark 6 and bake for another 15 minutes until golden.
- 5 While the baklava is cooking, make the syrup by simmering the sugar, water, orange zest and juice in a saucepan for 15 minutes until syrupy. Once the baklava is cooked, remove from the oven and drizzle with the syrup. Leave to cool in the tin.



Christmas mini cakes

Makes 5

FOR THE CAKE MIX

250g (9oz) mixed dried fruit

75ml (2¾ fl oz) brandy or rum (plus a little extra)

110g (4oz) soft dark brown sugar

110g (4oz) soft butter

125g (4½ oz) plain flour

2 large free-range eggs

25g (1oz) chopped nuts

25g (10oz) glacé cherries, chopped

finely grated zest of 1 orange

1 tbsp black treacle

1 tsp cinnamon

½ tsp mixed spice

TO DECORATE

6 tbsp apricot jam, slightly warmed

650g (1lb 6oz) marzipan

3 tbsp brandy/rum

500-600g (1lb 1oz-1lb 4oz) white sugarpaste icing

250g (9oz) red sugarpaste

lustre dust/edible glitter (optional)

- 1** Grease and line the bottom and sides of five small clean tins.
- 2** Prepare your fruit in advance by placing it into a bowl and pouring over the brandy or rum, stirring, then leave covered with a tea towel to soak overnight.
- 3** Preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas Mark 3. Cream the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, flour, spices, treacle and zest. Beat the mixture until well combined. Add the alcohol soaked fruit, then the nuts and cherries and stir through.

4 Spoon the mixture into the tins, levelling the tops with the back of a spoon, then bake for 40 minutes, or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Remove from the oven and allow to cool slightly before gently removing from the tins. Tip: Open the bottom of the can to remove.

5 Sit each one, still wrapped in greaseproof paper, on a piece of foil big enough to completely wrap each cake in. If you are wanting to feed the cakes with more alcohol, skewer a few holes on the top and drizzle on 1 tsp of brandy or rum. Wrap the cake in foil and store in a cool place until ready to ice. Leave for up to 1 week.

6 To decorate, roll out the marzipan a little bigger than the entire surface area of the cake and about 5mm (¼ in) thick. Brush the cake with the apricot jam. Drape the marzipan over, gently smooth it to fit and trim the edges where necessary. Repeat with the white sugarpaste. Brushing the marzipan with a very light coating of brandy or rum will help the paste to adhere.

7 To make the star decoration, cut several different sized stars from white and red paste. Allow the stars to dry slightly, then create piles of stars in alternating colours and point placement. Either use edible glue or a little water brushed on the stars to secure them in place.

8 Finishing touches can include glitter or lustre dust and a ribbon.



Rudolph's carrot cakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CAKES

175g (6oz) Demerara sugar
200g (7oz) self-raising flour, sifted
1 tsp baking powder
2 tsp cinnamon
50g (1½oz) sultanas
2 free-range eggs
120ml (4fl oz) sunflower oil
grated zest of 1 orange
200g (7oz) carrots, grated
75ml (2¾fl oz) milk

FOR THE ICING

100g (3½oz) butter
200g (7oz) cream cheese
100g (3½oz) icing sugar, sifted
1 tsp vanilla extract

FOR THE DECORATION

50g (1½oz) white ready-to-roll icing
orange and green food colouring

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4 and line a 12-hole muffin tin with paper cases.
- 2** For the cakes, mix the sugar, flour, baking powder, cinnamon and sultanas together in a large bowl. In a separate bowl, beat the eggs with the oil, then stir in the orange zest and carrot.
- 3** Add the egg mixture to the dry ingredients and stir until well mixed. If the mixture is too dry, add the milk. Fill the paper cases with the mixture so they are about three-quarters full, then bake for 20-25 minutes until they are golden and bounce back when you gently press the tops. Allow to cool on a rack.
- 4** For the icing, beat the butter, cream cheese, icing sugar and vanilla extract together in a large bowl until the mixture is smooth. Spread the icing on top of the cakes.
- 5** To decorate, shape the ready-to-roll icing into carrot shapes and place on top of the cupcakes.



Chocolate and cherry cake with shortbread and ginger

By Waitrose (www.waitrose.com)

Serves: 10

INGREDIENTS

icing sugar, to dust
200g (7oz) Green & Black's Maya Gold Chocolate
50g (1½oz) butter, diced
4 tbsp golden syrup
175g (6oz) Waitrose Mini Shortbread Rounds made with Butter
50g (1½oz) Opies Crystallised Stem Ginger, roughly chopped
100g (3½oz) whole blanched hazelnuts
200g (7oz) Waitrose Provençal Glacé Cherries
1 tsp cocoa powder

- 1** Break the chocolate into a small pan, then add the butter and syrup. Heat very gently, stirring from time to time, until smooth and glossy.
 - 2** Place the shortbread rounds in a large bowl and break into small pieces with your fingers. Stir in the ginger, hazelnuts and cherries, then pour in the chocolate mixture and stir until evenly coated.
 - 3** Tip the mixture into a 20cm (8in) loose-bottomed cake tin, patting down carefully. Chill for at least 2 hours. Dust the surface with cocoa powder and icing sugar before slicing and serving.
- TIP** Try this with other whole nuts such as almonds, pecans or pistachios. If preferred, leave out the ginger and use more cherries.



Iced rosette ginger cake

By Waitrose (www.waitrose.com)

Makes a 20cm (8in) cake

25g (1oz) butter
125g (4½oz) dark brown muscovado sugar
200g (7oz) plus 2 tbsp golden syrup
3 pieces of Waitrose Chinese Stem Ginger, finely chopped, plus 2 tbsp syrup from the jar
250g (9oz) self-raising flour
3 tsp ground ginger
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
50g (1¾oz) sultanas
2 large free-range eggs, beaten
250ml (9oz) milk
500g (1lb 1oz) Waitrose Christmas Ready to Roll White Icing
icing sugar, for dusting

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Grease and line the base of a 20cm (8in) round cake tin with non-stick baking parchment.
- 2** Place the butter, sugar, golden syrup and the chopped ginger and syrup together in a small saucepan and heat gently, stirring until the butter has melted.
- 3** Place the flour, ground ginger, bicarbonate of soda and sultanas in a large bowl.
- 4** In a jug, whisk together the eggs and milk. Pour the melted syrup mixture and the egg mixture into the bowl of flour and beat well with a wooden spoon until blended. Pour the mixture into the tin and bake for 35-40 minutes, or until a skewer inserted into the centre of the cake comes out clean.
- 5** Leave the cake to cool in its tin, then invert the cooled cake onto a serving plate so that the flat bottom is uppermost. Brush with the remaining golden syrup.
- 6** Roll out the icing on a sugar-dusted surface to the thickness of a pound coin. Using a 3cm (1in) cutter, stamp out as many discs as possible (you should get 55-60). Arrange an overlapping ring of icing discs around the edge of the cake. Continue to arrange the overlapping discs towards the centre of the cake, alternating the direction in which the circles overlap each other so that each ring forms a rosette pattern. Leave the icing to set for a couple of hours before slicing and serving.

Jaffa orange cakes

By Kate Doran

Makes 12 cakes

FOR THE ORANGE JELLY

60g (2¼oz) caster sugar

grated zest of 1 large orange

3 sheets of platinum-grade fine leaf gelatine

juice from 2 large orange

FOR THE CAKES

40g (1½oz) butter, melted

60g (2¼oz) icing sugar

20g (¾oz) plain white flour

40g (1½oz) ground almonds

¼ tsp finely grated orange zest

2 free-range egg whites, lightly beaten

a pinch of salt

TO FINISH

120g (4oz) dark chocolate, chopped

- 1 To make the jelly, combine the sugar and orange zest with 120ml (4fl oz) water in a small saucepan. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 10-15 minutes until the liquid has reduced by about half.
- 2 Meanwhile, line an 18cm (7in) square tin with clingfilm. Place the gelatine sheets in a bowl of cold water and soak for 5 minutes.
- 3 Remove the syrup from the heat and strain into a measuring jug. Squeeze as much water as possible out of the gelatine leaves, then stir them into the warm syrup until dissolved. Stir in the orange juice before straining into the lined tin. Chill for 2 hours, or until firm.
- 4 To make the cakes, measure out 30ml (1oz) butter and set aside. Use the remaining butter to grease a 12-hole muffin tin. Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5.
- 5 Sift the icing sugar and flour into a bowl, then whisk in the ground almonds and orange zest. Add the egg whites, salt and the butter and whisk to a thick batter.
- 6 Divide the batter between the muffin tin holes and bake for 9-12 minutes until the cakes are lightly golden and firm to the touch. Remove from the oven and leave to cool in the tin completely.
- 7 When the jelly has set, use a 4cm (1½in) cutter to cut out discs from the layer of jelly. Carefully place one disc on top of each cooled cake.
- 8 To finish the cakes, melt the chocolate in a heat-proof bowl suspended over a pan of barely simmering water (or in the microwave) and leave to cool for 10-15 minutes. Carefully spoon 1-2 tsp melted chocolate over the top of each jelly disc, coating the top of each cake. Leave to cool completely.
- 9 The cakes will keep in an airtight container for 2 days.



This recipe and the biscuit cake on page 34 are taken from *Homemade Memories* by Kate Doran, published by Orion. (RRP £18.99).





Chocolate honeycomb biscuit cake

Makes 10 very rich slices

125g (4½oz) butter, plus extra for greasing

350g (10½oz) dark chocolate, chopped

1 tbsp golden syrup

150g (5½oz) digestive biscuits, crushed

75g (2¾oz) honeycomb

1 free-range egg, lightly beaten

50g (1½oz) pecans, roughly chopped

1-2 tbsp cocoa powder, for dusting

- 1** Lightly grease a 1kg (2lb 2oz) loaf tin with butter; then line with baking parchment, making sure it comes a few centimetres above the edges.
- 2** In a large bowl suspended over a pan of barely simmering water; melt the chocolate, butter and golden syrup, stirring until smooth. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool slightly.
- 3** Add the honeycomb to the biscuits and bash together.
- 4** Pasteurise the egg by stirring it slowly and continuously into the chocolate mixture. Stir in the biscuits, honeycomb and pecans until well combined. Scrape the mixture into the tin, levelling it with a spatula. Press a piece of baking parchment over the top, then chill in the fridge for about 4 hours or until firm.
- 5** Remove the cake from the fridge 10 minutes before serving to allow it to soften slightly. Turn it out of the tin, dust the top with cocoa powder; then serve in thick slices.



Mincemeat muffins

By The Vegetarian Society (www.vegsoc.org)

Makes 12-14

350g (12oz) self-raising flour

1 tbsp baking powder

175g (6oz) caster sugar

135ml (4½fl oz) sunflower oil

375ml (12fl oz) water

150g (5oz) mincemeat

1 tbsp Demerara sugar

a pinch of cinnamon

- 1** Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5. Line a 12-hole muffin tin with deep muffin cases.
- 2** Sieve the flour and baking powder into a large mixing bowl. Add the sugar and mix well. Add the oil and water and whisk together quickly.
- 3** Fold in the mincemeat and spoon into the muffin cases about two-thirds full. Mix the sugar and cinnamon together and sprinkle over the top of each. Put the muffin tins into the oven immediately.
- 4** Bake for about 15-20 minutes until well risen and golden. Cool on a wire rack.



Friands

By Victoria Glass

Makes 8

125g (4½oz) icing sugar, plus extra for dusting

25g (1oz) cocoa powder

85g (3oz) desiccated coconut

**4 free-range egg whites
a pinch of salt**

**100g (3½fl oz) coconut oil
(plus extra for greasing),
melted and cooled**

icing sugar, to dust

- 1** Sift together the icing sugar and cocoa in a large mixing bowl. Stir in the desiccated coconut. Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4.
- 2** In a separate bowl, whisk the egg whites and salt to very soft peaks. Make a well in the middle of the dry ingredients and pour in the whisked egg mixture and coconut oil and lightly mix to form a batter.
- 3** Pour the batter into eight friand tins or eight holes of a muffin tin and bake in the oven for 15-20 minutes, or until an inserted skewer comes out clean. Leave to cool in the pan for 5-10 minutes, before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.
- 4** Once cold, dust with icing sugar and serve.



The recipes on this page are taken from *Deliciously Chocolatey* by Victoria Glass, photography by Dan Jones, published by Ryland Peters & Small. Readers can buy the book for the special price of £11.99 including p&p (RRP £16.99) by telephoning Macmillan Direct on 01256 302699 and quoting reference GLR EB8.



White chocolate and pistachio rose ring

By Victoria Glass

Serves 8

250g (9oz) soft butter

200g (9oz) caster sugar

5 free-range eggs

2 tsp rose water

100g (3½oz) white chocolate, melted, cooled

200g (7oz) ground pistachios

175g (6oz) self-raising flour

1 tsp baking powder

a pinch of salt

TO DECORATE

75g (2¾oz) white chocolate, melted, cooled

35g (1¼oz) unsalted pistachios, finely chopped

1-2 tbsp edible dried rose petals

- 1** Preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas Mark 3. Grease and flour a 25cm (10in) cake ring.
- 2** Cream the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Whisk in the eggs, one at a time, followed by the rose water and white chocolate. Fold in the ground pistachios. Sift in the flour and baking powder and add the salt, before folding the dry ingredients into the mixture.
- 3** Spoon the mixture into the cake tin and bake in the oven for 50-55 minutes, or until an inserted skewer comes out clean. Leave the cake to cool in its pan for 10 minutes on top of a wire rack, before turning out and leaving to cool completely.
- 4** Once cold, place the cake on a serving plate and drizzle the white chocolate over the top, before sprinkling with the chopped pistachios and rose petals. Leave the chocolate to set at room temperature before serving.



Cinnamon wreath with rye

By Brontë Aurell

Serves 10-12

FOR THE DOUGH

- 25g (1oz) fresh yeast
- 80g (2¾oz) butter, melted
- 300ml (10½oz) milk, at room temperature
- 50g (1¾oz) sugar
- 2 tsp ground cardamom
- 375g (13oz) white strong flour
- 80g (2¾oz) rye flour
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ free-range beaten egg
- FOR THE FILLING**
- 100g (3½oz) butter
- 3 tsp ground cinnamon

- 1 tsp ground cardamom
- 125g (4½oz) dark brown sugar
- 25g (1oz) caster sugar
- 70g (2½oz) chopped toasted nuts, e.g. almonds and hazelnuts

FOR THE TOPPING AND BRUSHING

- ½ free-range beaten egg mixed with a dash of milk, for brushing
- syrup
- icing sugar and warm water
- a piping bag fitted with a plain nozzle

- 1 Pour the melted butter into the milk. Add the yeast and stir until dissolved. Pour into a mixing bowl.
- 2 Add the sugar and cardamom and stir again. Add 250g (9oz) flour and all the rye flour; salt and egg. Mix until everything is

incorporated. Work the dough until it almost stops sticking and has a shiny surface – about 5 minutes with a mixer using a dough hook, or 10 minutes by hand.

- 3 The dough should only just reach the point of not being sticky. Leave to rise until it's doubled (about 40 minutes).
- 4 To make the filling, put the softened butter, cinnamon, cardamom and sugars into a bowl and mix well.
- 5 Tip the dough onto a floured surface and work it with your hands, adding more flour until you have a mouldable dough that can be rolled out. Cut the dough in half and roll each piece into a 50x40cm (20x15½in) rectangle. Spread the butter mixture evenly across the dough. Add three-quarters of the nuts across the surface. Roll the dough up lengthways so you end up with a long, tight roll. Place on a baking sheet and shape into a round circle, attaching the ends. Using scissors, cut slices almost to the base. Spread each roll out to the side and flatten slightly until you have done the whole wreath. Ensure the wreath is quite flat. Let it rest again for 30 minutes under a clean dish towel.
- 6 Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Brush the wreath gently with the remaining egg/milk and bake for 20-25 minutes or until done. Brush at once with a thin layer of warmed syrup, then sprinkle over the rest of the nuts and keep under a damp dish towel until cooled a bit. Once cooled, make the icing using a little icing sugar and a few drops of warm water and pipe over the wreath.

Vanilla and cardamom knots

By Brontë Aurell

Serves 10-12

25g (1oz) fresh yeast
250ml (9fl oz) milk,
heated to 36-37°C
80g (2¾oz) butter,
melted and cooled
40g (1½oz) caster sugar
400-500g (14-18oz)
white strong flour
2 tsp ground cardamom
1 tsp salt
1 free-range egg, beaten
flaked almonds,
to decorate

FOR THE FILLING

100g (3½oz) butter, at
room temperature
50g (1¾oz) sugar
1-2 tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp ground cardamom
80g (2¾oz) marzipan,
chopped (optional)

SYRUP

3 tbsp golden syrup and
6 tbsp water, heated
in a saucepan
2 baking sheets, greased
and lined with baking
parchment

1 Pour the warm milk into a bowl, sprinkle in the yeast and whisk together. Cover with clingfilm and leave in a warm place for about 15 minutes to become bubbly. Pour into the bowl of a food mixer fitted with a dough hook. Start the machine and add the cooled, melted butter. Allow to combine with the yeast for 1 minute or so, then add the sugar. Allow to combine for 1 minute.

2 In a separate bowl, weigh out 400g (14oz) flour; add the cardamom and salt and mix together. Start adding the flour and spices into the milk mixture, bit by bit. Add half the beaten egg.

3 Keep kneading for 5 minutes. You may need to add more flour – you want the mixture to end up a bit sticky, but not so much that it sticks to your finger.

4 Leave the dough in a bowl and cover with clingfilm. Allow to rise for around 30 minutes, or until it has doubled in size.

5 Dust a work surface with flour and turn out the dough. Using your hands, knead the dough and work in more flour if needed. Using a rolling pin, roll out the dough to a 40x50cm (15½x20in) rectangle.

6 To make the filling, place the butter in a bowl and add the sugar, vanilla extract and cardamom and mix well. Using a spatula, spread the butter evenly over the rolled-out dough.

7 Sprinkle the marzipan over the filling, then fold half the dough on top of the other, lengthways (you will end up with a 20x50cm rectangle). Using a knife or pizza cutter, cut 16 widthways strips of dough. Carefully take one strip and twist it a few times, then roll into a 'knot', carefully ensuring both ends are under or inside the bun so they do not spring open during baking. Place each bun on the baking sheet and leave to prove under a dish towel for another 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6.

8 Brush each bun lightly with the remaining beaten egg and bake in the oven for 10-12 minutes. Watch the buns as they bake: they can go dark very quickly and you may also need to move the buns around in the oven if they are not baking evenly. When golden, remove from the oven and immediately place a damp clean dish towel on top for a few minutes to prevent the buns from going dry. Brush the warm syrup lightly over the buns and decorate with flaked almonds.



The recipes on pages 36-37 and the ginger biscuits on page 38 are taken from *The Scandi Kitchen* by Brontë Aurell, photography by Peter Cassidy, published by Ryland Peters & Small. (RRP £16.99).



Nordic ginger biscuits

By Brontë Aurell

Makes 50-70

FOR THE CAKES

550g (1lb 3oz) plain flour

1 tsp bicarbonate of soda

1 tsp ground ginger

1 tsp ground cloves

2 tsp ground cinnamon

1 tsp ground cardamom

a pinch of ground allspice

a pinch of salt

150g (9½oz) butter, at room temperature

200g (7oz) golden syrup

100g (3½oz) granulated sugar

100g (3½oz) dark brown sugar

150ml (5fl oz) double cream

½ tsp orange zest

icing, to dust

- 1** Mix the flour and bicarbonate of soda with the dry spices and salt. Add the butter and all the other ingredients and mix until you have an even dough. It may still be sticky, but shape into a log and wrap in clingfilm and leave to rest in the fridge overnight before using.
- 2** Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6.
- 3** Roll out the dough thinly on a floured surface and use cookie cutters to cut your desired shapes. You want the biscuits to be thin.
- 4** Bake in the oven on lined baking sheets – each batch will take 5-6 minutes depending on the thickness. You want the biscuits to be a darker shade of brown.
- 5** Remove from the oven and cool on a cooling rack. Dust with icing sugar and serve, or keep in an airtight container.



Anzac biscuits

By Amber Rose

Makes 20

125g (4½oz) white spelt flour

100g (3½oz) unsweetened desiccated coconut

50g (1¾oz) dried blueberries

100g (3½oz) rolled oats

a pinch of salt

125g (4½oz) unsalted butter

85g (3oz) dark honey

½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line two baking trays with greaseproof paper.
- 2** Mix the flour, coconut, dried blueberries, oats and salt in a large bowl. Melt the butter and honey in a small saucepan over a gentle heat, stirring until smooth. Mix the bicarbonate of soda with 2 tbsp boiling water; add to the dry ingredients with the melted honey and butter; then stir until thoroughly combined.
- 3** Using your palms, roll pieces of the dough into balls about the size of a walnut and place on the baking trays, allowing plenty of space between each ball. Flatten them slightly using the back of a fork and bake in the oven for about 15 minutes, or until golden brown. Remove from the oven and allow to cool on a wire rack, before transferring to an airtight jar or biscuit tin.

This recipe and the recipes on page 39 are taken from *Love Bake Nourish* by Amber Rose, photography by Ali Allen, published by Kyle Books. (RRP £18.99).





Peach & pine nut cake

By Amber Rose

Serves 10-12

175g (6oz) unsalted butter, softened
160g (5½oz) white spelt flour, sifted
3 large free-range eggs
1 tsp baking powder
175g (6oz) maple syrup
80g (2¾oz) Greek-style natural yoghurt
2 tbsp finely grated lemon zest
80g (2¾oz) pine nuts
3 peaches, halved, stoned and sliced

- 1** Preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas Mark 2. Grease and line a 25cm (10in) loose-bottomed cake tin.
- 2** In a large mixing bowl, cream the butter until pale and fluffy with an electric hand mixer. Add 2-3 tbsp flour and beat in the eggs, one at a time.
- 3** Continue to beat until you have a light, fluffy mixture (if it looks as if it's curdling, add another tablespoon of flour). Add the remaining flour, the baking powder, maple syrup, yoghurt, lemon zest and 50g (1¾oz) pine nuts. Gently fold in until thoroughly combined.
- 4** Scrape the mixture into the tin, level the top with the back of a spoon or a palette knife and place the peach slices over the mixture. Scatter with the remaining pine nuts and bake in the oven for 1 hour, or until a skewer inserted into the centre of the cake comes out clean. Remove from the oven and leave to cool in the tin for at least 10 minutes, before carefully turning out onto a wire rack to finish cooling.



Lemon drizzle loaf

By Amber Rose

Serves 8-10

125g (4½oz) unsalted butter, softened
175g (6oz) white spelt flour, sifted
2 large free-range eggs
1½ tsp baking powder
a pinch of salt
175g (6oz) maple syrup
grated zest of 1 lemon
4 tbsp milk
TO GLAZE
5 tbsp sugar-free apricot jam
a squeeze of lemon juice

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Grease and flour a 23x12cm (9x5in) loaf tin.
- 2** In a large mixing bowl, cream the butter until pale and fluffy with an electric hand mixer. Add 2-3 tbsp flour and beat in the eggs, one at a time. Continue to beat until you have a light, fluffy mixture (if it looks as if it's curdling, add another tablespoon of flour).
- 3** Add the remaining flour, the baking powder, salt, maple syrup and the lemon zest, and fold in very gently using a metal spoon or spatula. Add enough of the milk to get a good dropping consistency.
- 4** Scrape the mixture into the tin and bake in the oven for about 30 minutes, or until the centre springs back to the touch. Remove from the oven and leave to cool in the tin for about 10 minutes, before turning out onto a wire rack to cool completely.
- 5** Place the apricot jam and the lemon juice in a small saucepan, bring to the boil, turn down the heat and simmer for a minute or so. Strain if you wish to make a smoother drizzle sauce. Brush the jam liberally over the top of the loaf.



Clementine polenta cake

By Leon

Serves 12

FOR THE CAKE

250g (9oz) unsalted butter, very soft

250g (9oz) caster sugar

2 free-range eggs

200g (7oz) fine polenta

100g (3½oz) ground almonds

1 tsp baking powder

grated zest and juice of 3 clementines

2 tbsp lemon juice

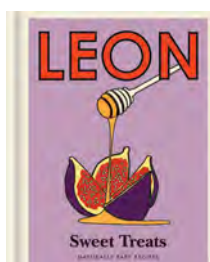
FOR THE SYRUP

50ml (1½fl oz) runny honey

juice of 1 clementine

juice of 1 lemon

- 1** Preheat the oven to 170°C/Gas Mark 3½. Butter a 25cm (10in) round cake tin and line it with baking paper.
- 2** In a large mixing bowl, beat the soft butter and sugar until very pale in colour and fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.
- 3** In a separate bowl, whisk together by hand the polenta, ground almonds and baking powder. Add to the butter mixture and beat well.
- 4** Fold in the clementine zest and juice and lemon juice before scraping the mixture into the tin.
- 5** Bake in the oven for 50 minutes, or until a skewer inserted into the centre of the cake comes out clean.
- 6** To make the syrup, heat the honey with the clementine and lemon juice in a small pan over a gentle heat until runny, then pour over the cake while it's still hot. Leave to cool in the tin.



Recipe taken from *Little Leon: Sweet Treats* by Leon Restaurants, published by Conran. (RRP 6.99).



Belgian slice

by Cherie Bevan and Tass Tauroa

Makes 16 pieces

600g (1lb 5oz)
plain flour

1 tbsp baking powder

½ tsp salt

1 tbsp mixed spice

1 tbsp ground ginger

220g (8oz) butter,
softened

230g (8oz) light
brown sugar

2 free-range eggs,
at room temperature

2 tbsp golden syrup

320g (1 1½oz)
raspberry jam

icing sugar, to dust

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Lightly grease and line the base and sides of a 20x30cm (8x12in) baking tin with baking paper.
- 2** Sift the flour, baking powder, salt and spices into a bowl.
- 3** Use an electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment to beat the butter and sugar until pale and creamy. Add the eggs, one at a time, mix well, then stir in the golden syrup and sifted dry ingredients. Mix until well combined.
- 4** Divide the dough into two portions, then press one portion into the tin. Flatten the second portion of dough, wrap in clingfilm and chill in the fridge for 15 minutes. Spread the raspberry jam over the base, then coarsely grate the chilled portion of dough over the jam.
- 5** Bake for 30 minutes or until golden brown. Allow to cool in the tin before slicing. Dust with icing sugar.
- 6** Using a sharp knife, cut into 5x7.5cm (2x3in) rectangles to make 16 pieces. This slice will keep for up to 3-4 days stored in an airtight container.



Plum Tart

by Cherie Bevan and Tass Tauroa

Serves 8-10

300g (10½oz) plain flour

150g (5½oz) cold
butter, diced

250g (9oz) plus 3 tbsp
caster sugar

a pinch of salt

2 free-range egg yolks,
at room temperature

1 tsp vanilla extract

750g (1lb 10oz) firm ripe
plums

4 tbsp apricot jam, to
glaze

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Lightly grease and line a 20x30cm (8x12in) baking tin with baking paper, ensuring the sides of the tin are fully lined.
- 2** Put the flour and butter into a food processor and process until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Add the sugar and salt and mix again. Mix in the egg yolks, 2 tbsp cold water and the vanilla and bring together until the ingredients form a ball.
- 3** Quarter the plums and remove the stones.
- 4** Press the pastry evenly into the tin, place the plums on top in rows, sprinkle with the extra sugar and bake for 45-50 minutes until cooked and golden.
- 5** Transfer to a wire rack and allow to cool in the tin. Gently heat the apricot jam in a small saucepan, then pour through a sieve into a bowl.
- 6** Brush the plums liberally with the glaze. Cut evenly into 8-10 pieces. Serve warm or at room temperature.



The recipes on this page are taken from *The Cook and the Baker* by Cherie Bevan and Tass Tauroa, photography by Chris Chen, published by Murdoch Books. (RRP £20).



Karen Davies
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Christmas

DESSERTS



Butterscotch devil's delight

By Kate Doran

Makes 4

FOR THE BUTTERSCOTCH

45g (1½oz) butter, cubed

150g (5½oz) dark muscovado sugar

¾ tsp flaky sea salt

450ml (16fl oz) double cream

3 tbsp cornflour

350ml (12fl oz) milk

seeds of half a vanilla pod

1-2 tbsp whisky

TO SERVE

handful of cocoa nibs

- 1 In a medium saucepan, brown 30g (1oz) of the butter. Once golden and toasty smelling, stir in the sugar and salt. Remove from the heat and whisk in 150ml (5fl oz) of the cream.
- 2 In a medium bowl, whisk the cornflour with 50ml (2fl oz) of the milk. Whisk in the brown butter mixture, followed by the remaining milk. Return everything to the saucepan and bring to a simmer over a medium heat. Cook for 3 minutes, stirring constantly, until thickened.
- 3 Remove the pan from the heat, then stir in the remaining butter, vanilla seeds and 1 tbsp whisky until smooth. Press clingfilm onto the top to prevent a skin forming and allow to cool completely at room temperature. Whip the remaining cream, adding 1 tbsp whisky at the start if you'd prefer a slightly boozier pud, then fold two-thirds into the cooled pudding.
- 4 Divide between four glasses or bowls and chill, along with the remaining cream, for a minimum of 2 hours. Remove the puddings from the fridge, top with an extra dollop of whipped cream and a sprinkle of cocoa nibs.



This recipe is taken from *Homemade Memories: Childhood Treats With A Twist* by Kate Doran, published by Orion. RRP £18.99.



Gluten-free chocolate Christmas pudding

By Doves Farm (www.dovesfarm.co.uk)

Serves 8

FOR THE PUDDING

25g (1oz) glacé cherries

100g (3½oz) raisins

100g (3½oz) dates

25g (1oz) currants

5 tbsp oil

6 tbsp water

1 tbsp black treacle

50g (1½oz) plain chocolate

**100g (3½oz) Doves Farm Free From
Gluten Brown Bread Flour**

1 tbsp cocoa powder

1 tsp mixed spice

- 1** Chop the cherries and dates, then mix them with the oil, water and treacle. Leave overnight if possible.
- 2** Grate the plain chocolate into a bowl, mix in the flour, cocoa and mixed spice. Stir in the soaked fruit mixture along with the raisins and currants.
- 3** Grease the sides of a 1 litre (2pt) pudding basin, press in the mixture and cover the top with two circles of parchment paper. Fold a piece of foil over the basin and tie it in place with string around the rim.
- 4** Place the pudding in a saucepan, half fill with boiling water; cover and simmer gently for 4 hours. Check regularly, adding extra boiling water to maintain the water level.
- 5** Remove the pudding from the pan and leave to cool, unwrapped, before storing until required.
- 6** To serve, simmer the pudding for a further hour; then turn out onto a plate.

Christmas pudding with tropical fruit and rum

By Waitrose (www.waitrose.com)

Serves 8

FOR THE PUDDING

100g (3½oz) Atora Light Shredded Vegetable Suet

50g (1¾oz) self-raising flour

100g (3½oz) fresh white breadcrumbs

1 tsp mixed spice

200g (7oz) light brown muscovado sugar

100g (3½oz) pecans, roughly chopped

150g (5oz) packet of Waitrose Soft Tropical Fruit Medley, roughly chopped

1 apple, coarsely grated

150ml (5fl oz) Waitrose Finest West Indian Rum

2 large free-range eggs, beaten

- 1** Place the suet, flour, breadcrumbs, spice, sugar, pecans, tropical fruit and grated apple in a large bowl.
- 2** Make a well in the centre, then add the rum and eggs, and mix well. Spoon into a buttered 1 litre (2pt) pudding basin. Top with a circle of buttered greaseproof paper, then cover with a sheet of pleated foil, scrunching it firmly round the rim of the basin. Tie around the top of the basin with kitchen string.
- 3** Place the basin in a steamer or sit it on an upturned, heatproof saucer in a large pan. Fill the pan three-quarters of the way up with boiling water; then cover and steam for 1½-2 hours, topping up occasionally with boiling water, if necessary.
- 4** Remove from the steamer or pan and leave the pudding to cool for about 15 minutes, before turning out and serving with Waitrose Vanilla and Fine Cognac Brandy Sauce or fresh cream.
- 5** The pudding can be made up to 3 days in advance and kept chilled. To reheat, steam for 30 minutes or until heated through.

TIP1 If you prefer not to use rum, try substituting it with 150ml (5fl oz) cold camomile tea.

TIP2 The tropical fruit flavours of this contemporary dish will go well with Riesling.



Classic Christmas pudding

By Waitrose (www.waitrose.com)

Serves 12

FOR THE PUDDING

2 x 150g (5oz) packs Waitrose LOVE Life Berry Mix

100g (3½oz) currants

50g (1½oz) mixed peel

175ml (6fl oz) Three Barrels French Brandy VSOP

100g (3½oz) plain flour

1 tsp baking powder

125g (4½oz) fresh white breadcrumbs

3 medium Waitrose British Blacktail

Free-Range Eggs, beaten

175g (6oz) dark brown muscovado sugar

½ tsp ground cinnamon

½ tsp ground nutmeg

zest of 1 lemon or orange, finely grated

150g (5oz) shredded vegetable suet

1 Bramley cooking apple, peeled and coarsely grated

50g (1¾oz) blanched almonds, roughly chopped

butter, for greasing

- 1 Place the dried fruit and mixed peel in a large glass bowl. Pour over the brandy, mix well, cover and place in the refrigerator to soak overnight.
- 2 In a large bowl, mix together the flour, baking powder, breadcrumbs and any remaining juices. Add the remaining ingredients and stir until well mixed.
- 3 Lightly butter a 1.2 litre (2pt) pudding basin and place a disc of baking parchment in the base. Spoon in the mixture, cover the top with two sheets of baking parchment topped with a double layer of foil and tie in place with string. Remember to tie on a handle with string to make lifting out of the pan easy.
- 4 Place the pudding in a large pan and pour hot water from a kettle halfway up the sides. Cover and steam for 6 hours, topping up with hot water from time to time.
- 5 Lift the pudding bowl from the pan and leave to cool completely. Remove the foil and baking parchment and cover with fresh sheets. Store in a cool, dark place for up to 6 weeks.
- 6 To reheat, steam for 2 hours as before until piping hot, then invert the pudding onto a large plate to serve.

TIP To flame the pudding, warm 100ml (3½fl oz) Three Barrels French Brandy VSOP in a small saucepan, but don't allow it to boil. Pour it over the pudding and, keeping it at arm's length, quickly ignite it.





Roasted figs with triple sec

By Leon

Serves 4

FOR THE FIGS

8-12 ripe black figs

25g (1oz) butter

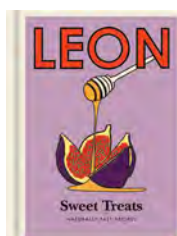
grated zest of ½ an orange

4 tbsp triple sec

2 tbsp honey

a pinch of salt

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4.
- 2** With a sharp knife, make a cross in the pointy end of each fig, cutting them about halfway through. Squeeze the fig's fat bottoms gently so that each one opens up like a flower. Lay the figs in a roasting tray or ovenproof dish and dot each fig with a little butter.
- 3** Mix the orange zest and liqueur together in a bowl and pour evenly over the figs. Drizzle over the honey and season with a pinch of salt. Pop them into the oven for 15-20 minutes. Serve hot, with some of the sauce spooned over them and some good ice cream or yoghurt.



The recipes on page 49 are taken from *Little Leon: Sweet Treats: Naturally Fast Recipes* by Leon Restaurants, published by Conran (www.octopusbooks.co.uk), RRP £6.99.



Spiced cranberry and apple crumble

By Leon

Serves 4-6

FOR THE CRUMBLE

175g (6oz) plain flour

110g (4oz) unsalted butter, chilled

50g (1¾oz) Demerara sugar, plus an extra 2-3 tbsp

a pinch of salt

750g (1lb 10oz) Bramley or other sharp cooking apples

175g (6oz) fresh or frozen cranberries

juice and grated zest of 1 orange

½ tsp ground cinnamon

½ tsp ground allspice

a good grating of nutmeg

- 1** Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6.
- 2** Sieve the flour and put it into a bowl. Cut in the butter and, using the tips of your fingers, rub it together with the flour, lifting it high out of the bowl every now and again, until you have what looks like coarse breadcrumbs. The coarser the crumb, the crumblier the crumble.
- 3** Mix in 50g of the Demerara sugar and a pinch of salt with your hands, then set aside.
- 4** Peel, core and slice the apples and pop the pieces into another bowl. Add the cranberries, orange zest and juice, the spices and the remaining Demerara sugar. Mix together well and place in a lightly buttered ovenproof dish.
- 5** Cover with the crumble mixture and cook in the oven for 35 minutes. Serve crisp and bubbling.



Orange liqueur puddings

By The Vegetarian Society (www.vegsoc.org)

Serves 4

FOR THE PUDDING

1 10g (4oz) white granulated sugar

1 ½ medium-large oranges, preferably thin skinned

1 25g (4½oz) self-raising flour

½ tsp baking powder

25g (1oz) cornflour

50g (1¾oz) hard margarine, plus extra for greasing (for vegan, use hard vegan margarine)

100ml (3½fl oz) milk (for vegan, use soya milk)

1 20ml (4fl oz) apricot brandy (if unavailable, Cointreau or plain brandy will do)

TO SERVE

1 tsp cocoa powder

spiced cream or spiced soya cream

TO DECORATE

frozen redcurrants

- 1** Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Grease four ramekin dishes with melted margarine. Take 10g (¼oz) granulated sugar and sprinkle the base and sides of each ramekin with about a tsp of sugar each.
- 2** Slice the whole orange very thinly, and grate the zest from the half orange. Use the slices of orange to line the ramekins: one whole round in the base and 3 half rounds on the sides, curved edge down – use the best of the slices and discard the rest.
- 3** Put the remaining sugar, flour, baking powder, cornflour, margarine and orange zest into a processor and whizz until a smooth powder. Add milk and process again until a smooth batter is just formed. Divide the batter between the ramekins, keeping the orange slices in position. Place the ramekins on a baking sheet and bake in the oven for 20-25 minutes, until the top feels firm to the touch – it will feel a bit crusty too. Remove from the oven and leave to cool in the ramekins.
- 4** When cold, while still in the ramekins, slice any domes off the top, prick all over with a fork and pour 30ml (1fl oz) apricot brandy over each pudding. Cover with clingfilm and store in a cool place or fridge for at least 8 hours – best 24 hours.
- 5** To reheat, keep the ramekins covered and steam for about 15 minutes, or (best) microwave on high for about 1 minute each, depending on your microwave, remembering to pierce the clingfilm first. Let stand for 2 minutes before serving.
- 6** Turn out and serve with spiced cream drizzled around the edge. Dust the plate edges with a little cocoa. Serve the rest of the cream separately. Top with redcurrants from the freezer.



Raspberry truffle torte

By The Vegetarian Society (www.vegsoc.org)

Serves 6-8

FOR THE TORTE

225g (8oz) raspberries

200g (7oz) plain chocolate

175g (6oz) creamed coconut

100g (3½oz) unsalted butter or solid vegan margarine

2 tbsp crème de cassis

200g (7oz) vegetarian/vegan rustic biscuits, crushed

FOR THE COULIS

225g (8oz) raspberries

icing sugar, to taste

2 tbsp crème de cassis

TO DECORATE

reserved raspberries and sprigs of mint

- 1** Lightly oil a 700g (1½lb) loaf tin with vegetable oil and line the base and sides with baking parchment.
- 2** Reserve a few raspberries for decoration and roughly chop the rest. Set to one side.
- 3** Melt the chocolate, creamed coconut and butter together over a gentle heat.
- 4** Stir the crème de cassis, raspberries and crushed biscuits into the melted mixture and mix well.
- 5** Pour the mixture into the prepared tin and lightly press down. Cover and chill for 3 hours or quick freeze for 1-2 hours.
- 6** For the coulis, purée the raspberries in a food processor. Add icing sugar to taste. Add the crème de cassis and purée again. Strain the sauce through a nylon sieve to remove all the pips. Taste and adjust the sweetness again if necessary. Chill the coulis until required.
- 7** Unmould the torte and cut into thin slices. Cut each slice in half diagonally and arrange with one half overlapping the other on individual serving plates. Decorate with reserved raspberries, coulis and mint sprigs.



Ginger and bourbon trifles

By The Vegetarian Society (www.vegsoc.org)

Serves 4

FOR THE TRIFLE

600ml (1pt) water

2 sachets of Vege-Gel

1 tsp natural orange extract

3 tbsp bourbon

3 tbsp ginger syrup (from the stem ginger jar)

3 tbsp caster sugar

50g (1¾oz) crushed ginger nut biscuits

80g (3oz) stem ginger, chopped

250ml (9fl oz) vegan custard

TO GARNISH

vegan whipped cream and mint leaves (optional)

- 1 Mix the water, Vege-Gel, orange extract, bourbon, ginger syrup and sugar together in a large saucepan, then bring to the boil.
- 2 While you're waiting for the water to boil, put half the biscuit crumbs in four tall glass tumblers and press down gently to form a base. Now divide the stem ginger between the glasses.
- 3 Once the water mixture has come to the boil, pour it into the tumblers, leaving about a 4cm (1½in) gap at the top. You may find it easier to pour the liquid into a jug first, then the glasses. Leave to set in the glasses – this will take at least an hour.
- 4 Cover the top of the jelly with the remaining biscuit crumbs, then top the glass with vegan custard.
- 5 You can top with whipping cream, if desired, for extra presentation. Garnish with a sprinkle of biscuit crumbs, a few pieces of stem ginger and a mint leaf. Serve immediately, so as not to let the crumb mixture go too soggy.



Baked Christmas pudding

By Ugg Foods (www.uggfoods.com)

Serves 8

FOR THE PUDDING

500g (1lb 2oz) mixed dried fruit (raisins, sultanas, apricots, figs etc.)

200ml (7fl oz) brandy or whisky

75ml (2¾fl oz) olive oil

225g (8oz) Ugg Fruit and Spice Muffin mix

150g (5oz) walnuts, chopped

1 tsp cinnamon

1 tsp ginger

1 tsp mixed spice

2 free-range eggs, beaten

finely grated zest and juice of 1 lemon

1 tbsp dark agave nectar

- 1 Mix the fruit with the alcohol, bring to the boil and leave to soak overnight.
- 2 Preheat the oven to 150°C/Gas Mark 2.
- 3 Add all the other ingredients and mix well.
- 4 Pour into a greased pudding basin or 20cm (8in) tin and bake for 1½-2 hours, checking regularly after the first hour until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean.



Red berries and cream cheese mug crumble

By Christelle Huet-Gomez

Makes 1 mug

FOR THE FRUIT

- 2 tbsp Philadelphia® cream cheese**
- juice of ½ a lemon**
- 2 tsp caster sugar**
- 1 apple, peeled, cored and diced**
- 2 tbsp frozen mixed red berries**

FOR THE CRUMBLE

- 1 slice of butter 5mm (¼ in) thick – 15g (½oz)**
- 1 tbsp soft brown sugar**
- 3 Lotus® biscuits or other caramelised biscuits, crushed**
- 1 tbsp plain flour**
- grated zest of ½ a lemon**

- 1** In a mug, mix the cream cheese with the lemon juice and 1 tsp of the sugar. Add the apple, then the red berries. Sprinkle another tsp of sugar on top. Cover the mug with clingfilm pierced several times.
- 2** Cook in the microwave for 90 seconds at 800 watts or 70 seconds at 1,000 watts. Pour off any excess liquid.
- 3** In a bowl, mix the butter, soft brown sugar, caramelized biscuits, flour and lemon zest with your fingertips to form a dough.
- 4** Crumble it into the mug and cook in the microwave for 1 minute at 800 watts or 50 seconds at 1,000 watts.
- 5** Let it cool a little before eating.



Pecan apple mug crumble

By Christelle Huet-Gomez

Makes 1 mug

FOR THE FRUIT

- 2 apples, peeled, cored and diced**
- 1 tbsp caster sugar**
- a knob of butter**
- 1 tbsp maple syrup**

FOR THE CRUMBLE

- 1 tbsp chopped pecan nuts**
- 1 slice of butter 5mm (¼in) thick – 15g (½oz)**
- 1 tbsp soft brown sugar**
- 3 heaped tbsp plain flour**
- a pinch of salt**
- 1 tbsp maple syrup**

- 1** In a mug, mix the apple with the sugar and butter. Cover the mug with clingfilm pierced several times.
- 2** Cook in the microwave for 1 minute at 800 watts or 50 seconds at 1,000 watts. Pour off any excess liquid. Add the maple syrup and stir again.
- 3** In a bowl, mix the butter, soft brown sugar, pecan nuts, flour and salt with your fingertips to form a dough.
- 4** Crumble it into the mug and cook in the microwave for 2 minutes at 800 watts or 90 seconds at 1,000 watts. Pour the maple syrup over the crumble before eating.

TIP For an even tastier mug crumble, dry toast the pecans in a frying pan for about 5 minutes.



The recipes on page 53 are taken from *Mug Crumbles* by Christelle Huet-Gomez, published by Hardie Grant Books, photography by David Japy, RRP £7.99.



Spiced apple strudel

By James Martin

Serves 6

FOR THE PASTRY
butter, for greasing
150g (5oz) plain flour
2 tsp vegetable oil
20ml (¾fl oz) white
wine vinegar
2-3 tbsp warm water
75g (2½oz) melted butter
450g (1lb) dessert apples

50g (1¾oz) caster sugar
1 tsp mixed spice
1 tsp ground cinnamon
75g (2½oz) sultanas

TO SERVE
1-2 tbsp icing sugar
double cream, lightly
whipped (optional)

- 1 Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5. Grease a baking sheet, then line it with silicone paper.
- 2 Place the flour, oil, vinegar and warm water in a food mixer fitted with a dough hook, and mix to a soft dough. Alternatively, place in a large bowl and use your hands. Knead for 10 minutes until the dough is very smooth and elastic. The more you work it, the softer it will get and the easier it will be to roll out thinly. When the dough is really elastic, roll it out over a damp, clean tea towel, as thinly as possible, into a rectangle ideally about 34x34cm. Brush with some of the melted butter.
- 3 Peel the apples, then grate them straight into a bowl, discarding the core. Add the sugar, mixed spice, cinnamon and sultanas and mix to combine. Spread all over the pastry in an even layer, then roll up as tightly as possible from the longer end, to form a long sausage.
- 4 Transfer to the prepared baking sheet and brush with the rest of the melted butter. Bake for 40-45 minutes until golden brown and crispy. Allow to cool slightly before dusting with the icing sugar. Serve with some lightly whipped double cream, if you like.



This recipe and the rum babas on page 55 are taken from *Sweet* by James Martin, photography by Peter Cassidy, published by Quadrille, RRP £20.



Rum babas

By James Martin

Makes 8

FOR THE BABAS

50g (1¾oz) caster sugar
15g (½oz) fresh yeast
75ml (2¾fl oz) warm milk
2 free-range eggs, beaten
75g (2¾oz) butter, softened,
plus extra for greasing
300g (10½oz) strong flour

FOR THE SYRUP

200g (7oz) light brown
soft sugar
200ml (7fl oz) water
100ml (3½fl oz) dark rum
TO SERVE
200ml (7fl oz) double cream
1 tsp vanilla bean paste

- 1** Put the sugar, yeast and milk into a large bowl and whisk until the yeast has dissolved. Add the eggs and butter and beat to combine. Add the flour and continue mixing until the batter is smooth and comes away from the side of the bowl.
- 2** Grease eight individual 6cm (2½in) baba moulds and divide the mixture between them, filling each one approximately half full. Set aside to rest in a warm place for 20-30 minutes, or until the mixture has doubled in size. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6.
- 3** Place the moulds on a baking tray and bake for 10-15 minutes, or until golden, then remove from the oven and leave to cool in the moulds. When cool, remove from the moulds and set aside.
- 4** For the syrup, put the sugar and 200ml (7fl oz) water into a pan and bring to the boil. Boil for 2 minutes, then remove from the heat and add the rum. Place the babas in the rum syrup to soak, two at a time.
- 5** Lightly whip the cream and vanilla bean paste to soft peaks. Serve the soaked rum babas with the whipped cream.



Christmas bread and butter pudding

Serves 6-8

FOR THE PUDDING

9 slices of brioche
25g (1 oz) softened butter, plus extra for greasing
100g (3½oz) Christmas pudding
600ml (1pt) double cream
2 tbsp brandy (optional)
2 large free-range eggs
25g (1 oz) golden caster sugar
finely grated zest of 1 orange

- 1** Grease a 20cm (8in) square ovenproof dish and set to one side. Butter one side of each slice of brioche, then cut into triangles and layer in the dish. Crumble the Christmas pudding over the top.
- 2** Whisk together the cream, brandy, eggs, sugar and orange zest, then pour over the brioche slices. Place in the fridge and leave to rest for an hour.
- 3** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4 and bake for 40 minutes until puffy and golden brown.
- 4** Serve warm and dust with icing sugar for an extra festive look.

Fig and anise millefeuille

By Richard Burr

Makes 10

FOR THE PASTRY

**two-thirds quantity puff
pastry dough (see right)**

plain flour, to dust

**1 large free-range egg,
lightly beaten**

icing sugar, to dust

FOR THE CUSTARD

170ml (6fl oz) whole milk

3 star anise

2 free-range egg yolks

35g (1½oz) caster sugar

1½ tbsp cornflour

100ml (3½oz)

double cream

FOR THE PUFF PASTRY

**225g (8oz) strong white bread
flour, plus more to dust**

½ tsp table salt

**225g (8oz) unsalted
butter, chilled**

1 tsp lemon juice

**1 large free-range egg,
lightly beaten**

FOR FIGS IN SYRUP

4 baby figs

**finely grated zest and juice
of 1 orange**

**50g (1¼oz) light brown
muscovado sugar**

1 cinnamon stick

- For the puff pastry, first mix the flour and salt in a large bowl, then chop 25g (1oz) of the butter and rub into the flour with your fingers. Add the lemon juice and 140ml (4¾fl oz) of cold water and mix with a knife until the mixture is brought together enough to handle. Tip onto a floured work surface and knead until smooth and elastic (probably 5-10 minutes). Allow to rest for 5 minutes.
- Roll out on a floured surface to a rectangle of 45x15cm (or thereabouts). You need quite a bit of worktop space for this. Roll out the remaining 200g (7oz) butter between sheets of clingfilm to a rectangle of 30x13cm. You'll need to peel off and reapply the clingfilm regularly to stop it ripping. Working quickly, peel the top layer of clingfilm off the butter and flip the butter onto the rolled-out dough, covering two-thirds of the length of the dough and also leaving a clear rim around all the edges. Fold the unbuttered dough onto half of the butter and press the edges to seal the butter in. Fold this layer over to cover the remaining butter and press down the edges all round to form a 15cm square: two layers of butter separated by three layers of dough. Wrap in clingfilm and chill in the fridge for 30 minutes.
- Take out of the fridge and roll back out to about 45x15cm. Fold up into thirds as before, to make a square. Turn the square through 90 degrees and roll out to 45x15cm again, then fold up as before. Wrap in clingfilm and chill for another 30 minutes.
- Repeat the last step, so the pastry has been folded a total of five times. Chill for another 30 minutes.
- For the custard, pour the milk into a saucepan with the star anise and set over a medium heat. Bring to a simmer; then take off the heat and leave to infuse for 10 minutes. Put the egg yolks in a heatproof bowl and whisk with the caster sugar and cornflour, using a hand or electric whisk.
- Once the milk has infused, fish out the star anise and pour the milk into the egg mixture, whisking as you do so. Pour back into the saucepan and set over a low heat. Stir constantly, using a silicone spatula, until the custard thickens up, then quickly scrape into a clean bowl. Lay clingfilm on the surface of the custard (to stop a skin forming) and put in the fridge to cool.

- While the pastry is chilling, poach the figs. Cut each fig into sixths, put in a saucepan with the orange zest and juice, sugar and cinnamon stick and set over a low heat. Once simmering, cook for 8-10 minutes, occasionally turning the figs. Fish the figs out of the saucepan and lay on a plate. Put in the fridge to cool.
- Preheat the oven to 220°C/Gas Mark 7. Line a baking tray with baking parchment and take the pastry out of the fridge. Roll two-thirds out on a floured surface to a neat rectangle 30x25cm and lay this on the baking tray. Lay another sheet of baking parchment on top of this and weigh it down with another baking tray to stop the pastry from puffing up too far. Bake in the oven for 10 minutes.
- Take the tray off the top of the pastry and return to the oven for another 10-12 minutes until golden brown and cooked through. Remove from the oven and take the pastry off the tray and off the baking parchment. Set on a wire rack to cool down.
- Returning to the custard, whip the cream with an electric whisk until it forms soft peaks. Take the cooled custard out of the fridge and fold in the whipped cream, a couple of tbsp at a time. Load into a piping bag and snip the end to make a 5mm opening.
- Once the pastry is completely cooled, put it on a chopping board and carefully cut into three rectangles of 25x10cm. Cut each of these into 10 pieces, each 10x2.5cm, to give 30 neat fingers of puff pastry. Some of the outside ones may be a bit ragged, but those are generally the baker's treats!
- Assemble each pastry: pipe 14 small blobs (two rows of seven) of custard onto the bottom layer of pastry. Lay the next layer on top and pipe on another 14 blobs of custard.
- Take the figs out of the fridge and cut each segment in half (giving you 48 segments). Lay segments of fig on top of the custard, all facing in the same direction. You might have a few fig pieces left over, depending on size.
- Lay a third layer of pastry on top and dust with a little icing sugar. Repeat to assemble all the pastries.

EXTRAS Infusing custards is something I'm becoming a little obsessive about these days and this recipe is a doozy. There are no rules: if you can strain it out of custard, you can use it to flavour that custard, so go mad. You can of course use ready-made extracts instead of infusions, but be careful of adding too much extra liquid as it can split a custard, which is always a shame. And you don't have to use custard. You can always whip up some cream and sweeten and flavour that instead, if you prefer. I am a big fan of figs in loads of things and I think they go really well in this recipe. Poach them in whatever sounds interesting. I quite like adding a couple of tbsp of Pernod to the mix for this one; just be careful not to overdo it or it can blast out the flavour of the figs. Finally, and I know this goes without saying, but don't feel compelled to make your own puff unless you really want to. Ready-made all-butter puff pastry from a packet works well for these and will knock off a lot of time if you're making them for a party. The most important thing is that you actually have a go at making them.





Pink grapefruit cheesecake

By Richard Burr

Serves 8-10

FOR THE CHEESECAKE

60g (2oz) unsalted butter, plus more for the tin

200g (7oz) ginger biscuits

1 gelatine leaf

300g (10½oz) cream cheese

50g (1¾oz) icing sugar

200ml (10fl oz) double cream

**finely grated zest and juice of 1 pink grapefruit
pomegranate seeds**

- 1** Prepare a 23cm (in) loose-bottomed tart tin by lightly buttering the base and sides, then sticking a circle of baking parchment to the buttered base.
- 2** Crush the biscuits in a freezer bag with a rolling pin and tip into a bowl. Melt the butter and pour into the crushed biscuits. Mix thoroughly with a spoon, then press into the prepared tin.
- 3** Cut up the gelatine leaf and soak in 30ml (1fl oz) of hot water to soften.
- 4** Put the cream cheese and icing sugar in a bowl and beat with an electric whisk. Add the double cream and squeezed-out, softened gelatine and whisk until the cream has thickened. Whisk in the grapefruit zest and juice, then pour into the tin.
- 5** Chill in the fridge for at least 2 hours.
- 6** Scatter some pomegranate seeds on top before serving.

EXTRAS This needs minimal decoration; it's simple and delicious. But if you can't bring yourself to leave well alone, you could add some pink food colour to the filling mix, or go for some good old-fashioned whipped cream to spoon plumply on top. Cheesecakes are so versatile. I always try and have ginger biscuits lying around the house to knock one up with whatever fruit I've got to hand.



The recipes on pages 56-58 are taken from *BIY* – *Bake It Yourself* by Richard Burr, photography by Chris Terry, published by Quadrille, RRP £20.



Tippy trifle

By Schär (nowinuk.schar.com)

Serves 4

FOR THE TRIFLE

- 2 Schär Sweet Brioche Rolls**
- 2 tbsp peach or apricot jam**
- 2 fresh peaches, stoned and each half sliced into 6**
- 100ml (3½fl oz) orange or peach juice**
- 50ml (2fl oz) dry sherry**
- 500g (1lb 2oz) gluten-free, ready-made custard**
- 200-300ml (7-10fl oz) whipped double cream**
- 15g (½oz) pistachio nuts or toasted almonds**

- 1** Place the peaches and juice in a saucepan, bring to the boil, cover and simmer for 5 minutes. Stir and leave to cool.
- 2** Cut the Sweet Brioche Rolls in half lengthways and spread with the jam. Slice each half into four pieces. Place in a glass dish. Leave six slices of peach for decoration and cut each remaining slice in half or thirds and place in and around the rolls. Pour over the juice and the sherry.
- 3** Cover the rolls and peaches with the custard and leave to cool for 1-2 hours.
- 4** Top with the whipped cream and decorate with the peach slices and nuts.



Christmas pudding ice cream

By Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk)

Serves 6-8

FOR THE ICE CREAM

- 2 x 500ml (18fl oz) cartons of Lakeland Devilishly Delicious Crème Brûlée**
- 500ml (18fl oz) Lakeland Devilishly Delicious Crème Anglaise**
- 150g (5oz) Christmas pudding, roughly broken up**
- 100g (3½oz) caster sugar**

- 1** Pour the two cartons of Devilishly Delicious Crème Brûlée into a bowl.
- 2** Stir in the caster sugar.
- 3** Churn in an ice cream maker until thick.
- 4** Stir in pieces of Christmas pudding.
- 5** Pour into a suitable container and freeze.
- 6** Prior to serving, remove the ice cream from the freezer and allow to soften.
- 7** Finish with Devilishly Delicious Crème Anglaise.
- 8** Serve with shortbread stars.





Eggnog bread pudding with cinnamon caramel sauce

By Sarah Coates

Serves 6-8

FOR THE PUDDING

60g (2oz) sultanas

60ml (2fl oz) brandy

1 small loaf of brioche (about 200g (7oz))

5 free-range eggs

115g (4oz) caster sugar

250ml (8½fl oz) whipping cream

375ml (12½fl oz) milk

½ tsp freshly grated nutmeg

1 tsp vanilla bean paste

30g (1oz) chopped pecans (optional)

FOR THE SAUCE

230g (8oz) caster sugar

190ml (6½fl oz) whipping cream

1 tsp ground cinnamon

- 1 Put the sultanas and brandy in a small saucepan over medium heat and bring to the boil. Turn off the heat and set the mixture aside to steep.
- 2 Slice the brioche thickly and place in a large shallow baking dish.
- 3 In a bowl, whisk together the eggs and sugar, then stir in the cream, milk, nutmeg and vanilla. Pour the custard over the brioche, scatter over the soaked sultanas and cover with clingfilm. Set aside to soak for at least 15 minutes (or a couple of hours if you put it in the refrigerator).
- 4 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4.
- 5 Scatter the pecans, if using, over the pudding and bake for about 25 minutes, or until set with a slight wobble in the middle. Leave to cool while you make the sauce.
- 6 For the cinnamon caramel sauce, put the sugar and 60ml (2fl oz) water in a saucepan over high heat and cook gently, without stirring, until the sugar dissolves. Continue to cook the sugar until it reaches a dark amber colour, about 5-8 minutes, then remove the pan from the heat and carefully add the cream. Wait until it bubbles down, then add the cinnamon. Return the pan to the heat and cook until everything comes together, about 30 seconds. Set aside to cool slightly.
- 7 Cut squares of the warm pudding and serve with the sauce drizzled over and a little whipped cream or ice cream.



Peppermint arctic roll

By Sarah Coates

Serves 6

FOR THE ROLL

3 free-range eggs

115g (4oz) caster sugar

75g (2½oz) plain flour

2 tbsp unsweetened (Dutch) cocoa powder

500ml (17fl oz) mint ice cream

crushed candy canes, to decorate

FOR THE SAUCE

125ml (4fl oz) single cream

2 tbsp liquid glucose or corn syrup

150g (5½oz) dark chocolate

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4 and line a 26x40cm (10¼x16in) rimmed baking tray with baking paper.
- 2 For the cake, put the eggs and sugar in a large bowl (or stand mixer with whisk attachment), and beat vigorously (or on high speed) until the mix is tripled in volume and very pale. Sift in the flour and cocoa powder and fold gently, until incorporated.
- 3 Scrape the mixture onto the baking tray and spread out gently in an even layer – try not to mess with it too much, you don't want to lose all that air! Bake for 12-15 minutes, or until dry and it springs back when touched lightly.
- 4 Lay another sheet of baking paper on another tray and flip the cake upside down onto it. Peel off the baking paper from the underside (now the top) of the cake, and tightly roll the cake up inside the fresh sheet of paper, Swiss roll style. Set the rolled-up cake aside to cool completely.
- 5 When the cake is completely cool, get your ice cream out of the freezer and let it sit for 5-10 minutes to soften slightly.
- 6 Unroll the cake and spread the ice cream over it, leaving a thick border at the far edge. Re-roll the cake, wrapping it in the paper, and quickly get it into the freezer to set. Leave it in the freezer for at least 4 hours.
- 7 To serve, make the sauce by melting the cream, glucose and chocolate in a small saucepan over low heat. Put the roll on a serving dish, pour over some sauce and scatter with crushed candy canes. Serve with extra sauce on the side.



The recipes on pages 60-61 are taken from *The Sugar Hit!* by Sarah Coates, photography by Chris Middleton, published by Hardie Grant, RRP £16.99.

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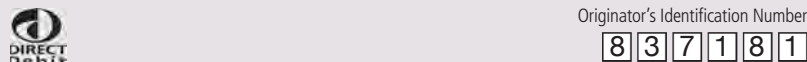
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Gifts & TREATS



Christmas pudding macaroons

By Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk)

Makes 24

FOR THE MACAROONS

- 175g (6oz) icing sugar**
- 125g (4½oz) ground almonds**
- 3 free-range egg whites**
- 75g (2¾oz) caster sugar**
- a few drops of brown food colouring**
- 10 drops of Lakeland Natural Christmas Pudding Flavour**

FOR THE FILLING

- 75g (2¾oz) butter, softened**
- 150g (5½oz) icing sugar, sieved**
- 2 tsp milk**
- 8 drops of Lakeland Natural Christmas Pudding Flavour**

TO DECORATE

- 100g (3½oz) white chocolate, melted**
- 60g (2oz) Renshaw Green Ready to Roll Icing**
- 30g (1¼oz) Renshaw Red Ready to Roll Icing**

- 1** Preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas Mark 3 and place two Silicone Macaroon Moulds onto baking trays.
 - 2** Whizz the icing sugar and ground almonds in a food processor until very fine, then sift into a bowl.
 - 3** Whisk the egg whites in a clean bowl until soft peaks form, then gradually whisk in the caster sugar until thick and glossy. Gently stir in the brown colouring and the Christmas pudding flavour drops.
 - 4** Using a spatula, gently fold half the almond and icing sugar mixture into the egg whites and mix well, then add the remaining half. Cut and fold the mixture until shiny and thick, then spoon into a piping bag fitted with a 1cm (½in) nozzle.
 - 5** Pipe small rounds of the macaroon mixture into the moulds and gently tap the baking trays on the work surface a few times to help the mixture settle. Leave to stand at room temperature for 20 minutes to form a skin, then bake in the oven for 16 minutes, or until the macaroons feel firm and are slightly raised. Cool completely before removing from the moulds.
 - 6** For the filling, beat the butter in a bowl until light and fluffy, then add the icing sugar, milk and 8 drops of Christmas Pudding Flavour. Mix until smooth. Sandwich the macaroon halves with the filling and give a gentle twist to bond them.
 - 7** To decorate, place the melted chocolate in a piping bag and allow to cool slightly, then snip off the end to let the chocolate flow out and create the sauce effect on the puddings.
 - 8** Once the chocolate has set, roll out the green icing and cut out 56 holly leaves with a small holly leaf cutter. Stick two leaves onto each macaroon with a little cold water. Make tiny holly berries from the red icing and stick on with a little cold water.
- TIP** Leave the macaroons to cool completely before trying to remove them from the moulds or they will break.







Cinnamon stars

By Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk)

Makes 20-25

2 free-range egg whites

1 tsp lemon juice

200g (7oz) icing sugar, plus a little extra for dusting

250g (9oz) ground almonds

2 tsp ground cinnamon

1 tsp ground ginger

finely grated zest of 1 lemon

- 1** Preheat the oven to 150°C/Gas Mark 2. Line a large baking sheet with baking parchment.
- 2** Whisk the egg whites in a large bowl until frothy. Add the lemon juice and whisk again until they form soft peaks.
- 3** Add the icing sugar, little by little, and continue to whisk until the mixture is stiff. Set aside a quarter of the mixture. Add the almonds, cinnamon, ginger and lemon zest to the remaining mixture and mix to form a stiff, sticky dough.
- 4** Place the dough on a piece of baking parchment dusted with icing sugar. Top the dough with another piece of parchment and roll to about 5mm (¼in) thick. Peel off the top piece of parchment and cut out as many cookies as possible using star cutters. Place on the lined baking sheet.
- 5** Cover the top of each star with a little of the reserved meringue mixture. Bake in the oven for 12-15 minutes until the meringue is set, but not browned. Leave to cool, then store in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.



Dark chocolate, gingerbread and apricot truffles

By Georgie Young (www.greensofthestoneage.com)

Makes 16

FOR THE TRUFFLES

125ml (4½fl oz) coconut milk

100g (3½oz) dark vegan chocolate

1½ tsp blackstrap molasses

1 tbsp raw honey or pure maple syrup

1 tsp ground ginger

1 tsp ground cinnamon

¼ tsp ground allspice/nutmeg

⅛ tsp ground cloves

a pinch of Himalayan pink salt

3 tbsp dried apricots, chopped

FOR THE DUSTING

1 tbsp cacao powder

1 tsp ground cinnamon

½ tsp ground ginger

FOR THE CHOCOLATE COATING

40g (1½oz) 90% dark vegan chocolate

¼ tsp ground ginger

dried apricots, and edible gold leaf, for topping

- 1 For the truffles, cut the chocolate into fine shards, place into a medium-sized bowl, then set aside.
- 2 In a small saucepan, add the coconut milk, molasses, honey, spices and salt. Heat on a low heat until it begins to simmer. Stir frequently. Once heated, pour the milk over the chocolate and add the chopped apricots. Stir very gently to prevent the chocolate from going grainy.
- 3 Transfer the mixture into a sealed container and chill in the fridge overnight, or for at least 4 hours.
- 4 Using a melon baller or tablespoon measure, scoop out the truffle balls and quickly, but gently, roll them in the palm of your hands into smooth balls.
- 5 Combine the cacao powder, ground cinnamon and ginger until evenly distributed. Coat half of the truffles in cocoa and gently tap off any excess with your fingers.
- 6 In a bain-marie, heat the chocolate and ground ginger on a low heat until fully melted. Using a fork, gently roll the truffles in the chocolate and place them onto a lined baking tray. Top with dried apricots or even edible gold leaf!
- 7 Store the truffles in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 1 week, or in the freezer for 3 months. If storing in the freezer, be sure to thaw out in the refrigerator before leaving at room temperature.



Snowflake treats

By Ashley Fox Whipple

Makes about 16

3 tbsp margarine or coconut oil

280g (10oz) mini marshmallows

90g (3¼oz) white chocolate chips

white gel food colouring

150g (5½oz) crisp rice cereal

250g (9oz) buttercream frosting

blue food colouring

green food colouring

white pearl nonpareils

edible disco dust

- 1** Melt the margarine or heat the coconut oil in a large saucepan over a low heat. Add the marshmallows, and stir. Let the marshmallows melt completely, stirring occasionally. Add the white chocolate chips and stir until melted. Remove from the heat. Stir in a few drops of white gel food colouring.
- 2** Pour in the rice cereal and mix until covered with marshmallow. Turn out onto a greased baking sheet. With greased hands, press the mixture down into a layer 1 cm (½in) thick. Allow to cool completely.
- 3** Cut out snowflake shapes with a greased cookie cutter.
- 4** Tint about 125g (4½oz) buttercream frosting with 5 drops of blue and 1 drop of green food colouring.
- 5** Using a piping bag and decorating tip, pipe different designs and lines on the snowflake treats. Press white pearl nonpareils into the frosting at the tips, line the intersections and anywhere else you would like. Be creative. Lightly sprinkle disco dust over the finished treats to give them a wintery sheen.
- 6** Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator and serve within 24 hours.



This recipe and the snowballs on page 71 are taken from *Super Cute Crispy Treats* by Ashley Fox Whipple, Published by Race Point Publishing. (RRP £12.99).



Coconut Snowballs

By Ashley Fox Whipple

Makes about 18

2 tbsp coconut oil

140g (5oz) mini marshmallows

75g (2¾oz) crisp rice cereal

280g (10oz) sweetened flaked coconut

455g (1lb) almond bark

- 1** Heat the coconut oil in a large saucepan over a low heat. Add the marshmallows and stir. Let the marshmallows melt completely, stirring occasionally, then remove from the heat. Pour in the rice cereal and stir until covered with marshmallow.
- 2** With greased hands, form the mixture into balls that are 2.5-5cm (1-2in) in diameter; then place them on a greased baking sheet. Allow to cool. Place the coconut flakes in a shallow bowl.
- 3** Using a microwave-safe mug, heat half of the almond bark in the microwave in 30-second increments until completely melted, stirring between each heating. Insert a toothpick into a treat and dip into the melted almond bark. Gently shake off any excess almond. Place the dipped treat in the bowl of flaked coconut, removing the toothpick at the same time. Sprinkle some coconut on top and gently roll the ball around to coat completely. Move the snowballs to a sheet of parchment paper and allow to set. Melt additional almond bark as needed.



Chocolate and cherry cannelés

By James Martin

Makes 8

250ml (9oz) milk

25g (1oz) butter, plus extra for greasing

1 tsp vanilla bean paste

100g (3½oz) caster sugar

1 free-range egg

1 free-range egg yolk

25g (1oz) plain flour

25g (1oz) cocoa powder

16 maraschino cherries, halved

- 1** Preheat the oven to 240°C/Gas Mark 9 and butter eight cannelé moulds really well, or grease lightly if using silicone moulds.
- 2** Place the milk, butter and the vanilla bean paste into a saucepan and heat until just simmering. Meanwhile, whisk the sugar, egg and egg yolk together in a large bowl and sift the flour and cocoa powder onto the mixture, then whisk together. Pour the hot milk onto the egg mixture and whisk together until it forms a thick batter.
- 3** Pour into the moulds until they are three-quarters full, then drop a few pieces of cherry into the centre of each mould. Place on a baking tray and cook in the oven for 10 minutes, then lower the oven temperature to 190°C/Gas Mark 5 and cook for 30-35 minutes until dark brown and slightly domed.
- 4** Remove from the moulds straight away and turn out onto a wire rack to cool. They need to develop a firm crust, so it's best to turn them out as quickly as possible so they don't steam in the moulds and soften.



Brigadeiros

By Shauna Sever

Makes about 24

400g (14oz) sweetened condensed milk

30g (1¼oz) unsweetened natural cocoa powder

2 tbsp unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

a pinch of fine sea salt

¼ tsp vanilla extract

chocolate sprinkles, grated

chocolate, cocoa powder, or other creative coatings

- 1 Lightly grease a 20x20cm (8x8in) baking dish with butter or non-stick cooking spray.
- 2 In a medium heavy-bottomed saucepan, combine the sweetened condensed milk, cocoa powder, butter and salt. Place the pan over a medium heat and whisk often to encourage the butter to melt and the cocoa powder to dissolve. Once the candy comes to a bubble, reduce the heat to low and cook, whisking often. The candy is finished when it's the consistency of a thick brownie batter and slides in a soft mass from one side of the pan to the other when the pan is tilted – this can take anywhere from 15-25 minutes, depending on your stove, but it's better to keep the heat low and give the candy more time to cook down, than to rush it and risk burning it. Stir in the vanilla extract. Pour the candy into the baking dish. Chill in the refrigerator for about 1 hour until the candy is somewhat firm with a clay-like texture.
- 3 When you're ready to form the candies, pour your desired coatings onto individual plates. Use your fingers or a small ice cream scoop with a capacity of about one teaspoon to portion out bits of candy and roll them into 2.5cm (1in) balls. Drop each ball into a dish of coating and roll to coat. Set the finished candies on a small baking sheet, or place them into small paper candy cups. Store in the refrigerator in an airtight container.



Recipe taken
from *Real Sweet*
by Shauna Sever,
published by
Harper Collins.
RRP (£16.99).



Rosemary sea salt caramels

By Kate Doran

Makes about 40

sunflower oil, for greasing

200ml (7fl oz) double cream

3 small sprigs of fresh rosemary, leaves picked and coarsely chopped

65g (2½oz) butter, cubed

50g (1½oz) light muscovado sugar

175g (6oz) caster sugar

125g (4½oz) golden syrup

1 tsp vanilla extract

a large pinch of salt

- 1 Lightly grease an 18cm (7in) square cake tin with oil and line with baking parchment.
- 2 In a medium saucepan, bring the cream just to the boil, then turn off the heat. Add the rosemary, cover and leave to infuse for 45 minutes. Strain the cream through a fine mesh sieve, then return the infused cream to the pan. Add the butter and muscovado sugar and cook over a medium heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Remove the pan from the heat.
- 3 In a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan, combine the caster sugar, golden syrup and 3 tbsp water. Sweep down the sides of the pan with a dampened pastry brush, so there are no sugar crystals round the edge. Heat the mixture until the sugar has dissolved, then bring to the boil. Cover with the lid for 1 minute, then remove. Insert a sugar thermometer and cook, without stirring, until the mixture reaches 149°C. If it looks like the caramel is burning in spots, gently and carefully swirl the pan.
- 4 Whisk the warm cream and butter mixture into the caramel and continue to cook until the mixture reaches 120°C. Remove from the heat and stir in the vanilla extract and sea salt. Pour into the tin and leave to cool completely at room temperature, then chill for 1 hour – this will make the caramels easier to cut.
- 5 Turn the caramel out of the tin and use a lightly greased knife to cut into pieces. Wrap individually in waxed paper squares.
- 6 The caramels will keep in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.



Recipe taken from *Homemade Memories* by Kate Doran, published by Orion. (RRP £18.99).





Coconut and cranberry macaroons

By Cherie Bevan and Tass Tauroa
Makes 12

220g (7¾oz) caster sugar
20g (¾oz) liquid glucose
3 free-range egg whites,
at room temperature
130g (4½oz) shredded coconut
135g (4¾oz) desiccated coconut
2 tsp gluten-free plain flour
75g (2¾oz) dried cranberries, chopped
melted dark chocolate, to dip (optional)
icing sugar, to dust (optional)

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line a baking tray with baking paper.
- 2** Combine the caster sugar, glucose and egg whites in a medium saucepan. Cook over a low heat until the mixture reaches 60°C on a sugar thermometer, stirring constantly.
- 3** Remove the saucepan from the heat, then add the shredded and desiccated coconut, the flour and cranberries. Mix until just incorporated.
- 4** Divide the mixture into 12 equal portions and shape as desired. Bake in the oven for 12-15 minutes until a light golden brown.
- 5** Leave to cool completely on the tray. At this stage you can dip in melted dark chocolate or dust with icing sugar, if desired.



This recipe and the caramel fudge on page 77 are taken from *The Cook and Baker* by Cherie Bevan and Tass Tauroa, photography by Chris Chen, published by Murdoch Books. (RRP £20).



Caramel fudge

By Cherie Bevan and Tass Tauroa

Makes about 24 pieces

415g (14½oz) light brown sugar
2 x 400g (14oz) tins of condensed milk
160g (5½oz) unsalted butter, chopped
90g (3¼oz) golden syrup
2 tsp vanilla extract
2 tsp sea salt
360g (12½oz) white chocolate

- 1** Lightly grease and line the base and sides of a 20x30x4cm (8x12x1½in) tin with baking paper.
- 2** In a heavy-based saucepan, combine the sugar, condensed milk, butter, golden syrup, 80ml (2½fl oz) water, vanilla and salt. Stir over a low heat continuously for about 5 minutes, or until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture looks even.
- 3** Increase the heat to a simmer, stirring constantly, and cook until it reaches 106°C on a sugar thermometer; for about 10-15 minutes. Remove from the heat, add the chocolate and stir in gently, being careful to not overwork it.
- 4** Pour into the tin and leave to set at room temperature.
- 5** Cut into 5x5cm (2x2in) pieces. Store in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.



Almond truffle biscuits

By Donna Hay

Makes about 30

55g (2oz) unsalted butter, softened
100g (3½oz) brown sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp finely grated orange zest
1 free-range egg yolk
75g (2¾oz) plain flour, sifted
25g (1oz) almond flour
¼ tsp baking powder

FOR THE CHOCOLATE TRUFFLE FILLING

200g (7oz) dark cooking chocolate
50ml (2fl oz) single cream
20g (¾oz) butter

- 1** Preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas Mark 3. Place the butter, sugar, vanilla and orange zest in the bowl of an electric mixer and beat for 8-10 minutes, or until light and creamy. Add the egg and beat well to combine. Add the flours and baking powder and beat for 1 minute or until well combined. Spoon 20 teaspoons onto a baking tray lined with non-stick baking paper and flatten with your hand.
- 2** Cook for 8-10 minutes or until golden. Allow to cool. Repeat with the remaining ingredients to make about 60 biscuits.
- 3** For the truffle filling, place all the ingredients in a saucepan over a low heat and stir until the chocolate has melted and is smooth. Set aside to cool for 30 minutes.
- 4** Place the chocolate truffle filling into a piping bag and pipe a small amount onto half the biscuits. Sandwich together with the other biscuits.





Christmas muffins

By Donna Hay

Makes 6

- 240g (8½oz) plain flour**
- 2 tsp baking powder**
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon**
- 120g (4¼oz) caster sugar**
- 300g (10½oz) sour cream**
- 1 free-range egg**
- 3 tbsp vegetable oil**
- 90g (3½oz) dried sweetened cranberries**
- 225g (8oz) pitted cherries, halved**

- 1** Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Place the flour, baking powder, cinnamon and sugar in a bowl and mix well. Place the sour cream, egg and oil in another bowl and whisk well.
- 2** Add the cream mixture to the flour mixture with the cranberries and cherries and mix until just combined. Line six ramekins with non-stick baking paper, to make tall cylinders (see photo) and secure with string.
- 3** Spoon the mixture into the ramekins and bake in the oven for about 30 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the centre of a muffin comes out clean.



Pistachio & cranberry nougat

By Donna Hay

Makes 36 squares

- 525g (19oz) caster sugar**
- 225ml (8fl oz) liquid glucose**
- 60ml (2½fl oz) honey**
- confectionery rice paper**
- 2 free-range egg whites**
- 200g (7oz) pistachio nuts, shelled**
- 110g (4oz) dried sweetened cranberries**

- 1** Place the sugar, glucose and honey in a saucepan over a medium heat and stir until the sugar begins to dissolve. Increase the heat and boil for 7 minutes, or until 140°C on a sugar thermometer.
- 2** Line the base of a 20cm (8in) square cake tin with rice paper.
- 3** Place the egg whites in the bowl of an electric mixer and whisk until stiff peaks form. Add the sugar mixture in a thin, steady stream, beating constantly until the mixture is very thick. Fold in the pistachios and dried cranberries and spoon into the tin.
- 4** Cover the nougat with rice paper and press to flatten. Set aside in a dry place for 8 hours, or until set (do not refrigerate). To serve, remove the nougat from the tin and cut into squares.
- 5** Store in a paper-lined airtight container away from moisture. Again, do not refrigerate.

donna hay



The recipes on this page and the truffle biscuits on page 77 are taken from *Simple Essentials Christmas* by Donna Hay, published by HarperCollins. (RRP £12.99).



Goats' cheese and raspberry truffles

By Seasonal Berries (www.seasonalberries.co.uk)

Makes 16

150g (5oz) rindless French soft goats' cheese

1 tsp runny honey

½ tsp vanilla extract

a pinch of salt

75g (3oz) raspberries

25g (1oz) pistachio nuts, finely chopped

1 tbsp raw cacao powder

- 1** Add the goats' cheese, honey, vanilla and salt to a bowl and fork together until just mixed. Add the raspberries, break up with the fork and lightly mix into the goats' cheese mix.
- 2** Scoop heaped teaspoons of the mixture onto a small baking sheet to make about 16 rough-shaped mounds.
- 3** Spoon the chopped pistachio nuts onto a saucer and the cocoa onto a second saucer. Roll half the truffles into the pistachio nuts, one at a time until evenly coated, then add to small paper cases.
- 4** Roll the remaining truffles in the cacao powder; add to small paper cases, then chill for at least 1 hour until firm. Pack into an airtight box, store in the fridge and eat within 2 days.



Branded chocolate truffles

By Seasonal Berries (www.seasonalberries.co.uk)

Makes 24

FOR THE TRUFFLES

150ml (5fl oz) double cream

200g (7oz) dark chocolate, broken into pieces

2 tbsp icing sugar

3 tbsp brandy, cherry brandy or kirsch

100g (4oz) fresh raspberries

a little sifted cocoa powder, for shaping

FOR THE TOPPINGS

200g (7oz) dark chocolate, broken into pieces

**tiny pieces of crystallised rose petals,
or pink edible glitter flakes**

- 1 For the truffles, pour the cream into a small saucepan, bring just to the boil, then take off the heat and add the chocolate pieces. Set aside for 5 minutes until the chocolate has melted.
- 2 Add the sugar and brandy or kirsch and stir until smooth. Leave to cool, then transfer to the fridge for about 3 hours until firm.
- 3 Scoop teaspoons of the truffle mixture onto a baking sheet and continue until you have 24 mounds, all about the same size. Make a dip in the centre of each, add a raspberry, then press the truffle mixture around the raspberry to enclose it completely. Roll them between your hands, dusted with sifted cocoa powder, to achieve an even round shape. Return the truffles to the fridge to chill for 1 hour until firm.
- 4 To decorate, add the dark chocolate pieces to a bowl and set over a saucepan of very gently simmering water, so that the bowl stands above the top of the pan and the base of the bowl is not touching the water. Heat for about 5 minutes until the chocolate has just melted.
- 5 Take the bowl off the pan, then slide the prongs of a fork under one of the truffles and hold over the melted chocolate. Using a teaspoon, spoon a little of the melted chocolate over the top to cover completely. Slide off the fork onto a baking sheet lined with non-stick baking paper. Continue until all the truffles have been coated, then sprinkle with tiny pieces of crystallised rose petals or glitter flakes.
- 6 Chill for about 30 minutes or until firm, then transfer the truffles to petit four cases and pack into a box lined with tissue paper or non-stick baking paper. Add the lid and tie with ribbon. Keep in the fridge and eat within 3 days.





Chocolate and vanilla pinwheels

By Victoria Glass

Makes 30

FOR THE VANILLA DOUGH

125g (4½oz) soft butter

65g (2½oz) granulated sugar

135g (5oz) plain flour

50g (1¾oz) rice flour

a pinch of salt

1 tsp vanilla extract

½ a free-range egg, beaten

FOR THE CHOCOLATE DOUGH

125g (4½oz) soft butter

65g (2½oz) caster sugar

115g (4oz) plain flour

50g (1¾oz) rice flour

25g (1oz) cocoa powder

a pinch of salt

1 tsp vanilla extract

½ a free-range egg, beaten

a little milk, for brushing

1-2 baking sheets lined with baking parchment

- 1** For the vanilla dough, cream together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Sift in the flours and salt, then mix together with the vanilla and egg until just combined. Do not overwork the dough or your pinwheels will be tough. Wrap the dough in clingfilm and chill for at least 30 minutes, or until firm enough to roll.
- 2** For the chocolate dough, cream together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Sift in the flours, cocoa and salt, then mix together with the vanilla and egg until just combined. Do not overwork the dough or your pinwheels will be tough. Wrap the dough in clingfilm and chill for at least 30 minutes, or until firm enough to roll.
- 3** Roll both doughs into 3mm (⅛in) thick rectangles about 20x30cm (8x12in) long. Brush the chocolate rectangle with a little milk and place the vanilla rectangle on top. Gently roll again to ensure the two doughs stick together. Trim away the edges of the rectangles and roll up the dough tightly like a Swiss roll, starting from the long edge. Carefully wrap the dough roulade in clingfilm and place in the fridge for at least 1 hour, or until very firm.
- 4** Preheat the oven to 170°C/Gas Mark 3.
- 5** Unwrap the dough and use a serrated bread knife to slice it into 1cm (½in) thick cookies. If the biscuits are no longer perfectly round after slicing, carefully reshape them with your hands. Arrange the biscuits on baking sheets lined with baking parchment, spaced well apart to allow for spreading. Brush with a little milk and bake in the oven for 18-20 minutes, or until firm. Transfer to a wire rack to cool before eating.



Recipe taken from *Deliciously Chocolatey* by Victoria Glass, photography by Dan Jones, published by Ryland Peters & Small. Readers can buy the book for the special price of £11.99 including p&p (RRP £16.99) by telephoning Macmillan Direct on 01256 302699 and quoting reference GLR EB8.





Black and white cookies

By Monika Römer and Oliver Brachat

Makes 1 tray

FOR THE DOUGH

290g (10oz) flour

1 tsp baking powder

125g (4½oz) icing sugar

a pinch of salt

150g (5½oz) cold butter

1 free-range egg yolk

3 tsp cocoa powder

a little milk, for brushing

- 1** Mix the flour, baking powder, icing sugar and salt together on a work surface. Cut the butter into small pieces and add to the flour mixture until crumbly. Add the egg yolk and combine everything together into a smooth dough. Split the dough into two equal halves and knead the cocoa powder into one of them. Form each piece of dough into a ball, wrap in clingfilm, then chill in the fridge for 2 hours.
- 2** Roll out both pieces of dough into 1 cm (½in) squares on a floured work surface. Cut into 1 cm (½in) wide strips. Lay a light strip, a dark strip and again a light strip next to each other, brush the adjacent edges with a little bit of milk, then join together. Repeat this process again. Wrap the square pieces of dough in clingfilm and place in the freezer for 10 minutes.
- 3** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Cut the pieces of dough into 3mm (⅛in) thick slices with a sharp knife and lay them next to each other on the baking sheet. Bake in the oven for 12 minutes until lightly coloured. Remove from the oven and allow to cool on a wire rack.



Chocolate-covered spice cookies

By Monika Römer and Oliver Brachat

Makes 2 trays

FOR THE DOUGH

24 free-range eggs

1 tsp lemon juice

150g (5½oz) icing sugar

a pinch of salt

finely grated zest of 1 lemon

1-2 tsp gingerbread spice

200g (7oz) ground almonds

200g (7oz) ground hazelnuts

FOR THE BASE LAYER

28 baking wafers

FOR THE ICING

300g (10½oz) dark chocolate

- 1** Preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas Mark 3. Beat the eggs, lemon juice and icing sugar into a thick cream using a hand mixer. Mix in the remaining dough ingredients with a wooden spoon. Place the dough onto the wafers in little dome shapes, approximately 1 cm (½in) thick.
- 2** Put the gingerbread cookies onto two baking sheets, place them in the oven and bake for about 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool.
- 3** Meanwhile, melt the chocolate over a double boiler; mix well, then spread on top of the gingerbread.

Anise cookies

By Monika Römer and Oliver Brachat

Makes 2 trays

FOR THE DOUGH

150g (5½oz) icing sugar

2 large free-range eggs

a pinch of salt

2 tsp vanilla sugar

150g (5½oz) flour

1 tsp ground star anise

1 The dough can be prepared the day before, if necessary. Sift the icing sugar into a mixing bowl and add the eggs, salt and vanilla sugar. Place the bowl in a hot water bath and beat the ingredients using a hand mixer until the cream has reached a temperature of 40°C. Remove the bowl from the water bath and stir until the mixture is cold again. Sift the flour onto the mixture and fold it in gently along with the star anise. Pour the mixture into a piping bag and squeeze approximately quarter-sized circles onto the baking sheets, making sure not to place them too close together. Allow to harden at room temperature for 12 hours.

2 Preheat the oven to 140°C/Gas Mark 1. Grease two baking sheets and sprinkle with flour. Place the trays in the oven, and bake for 20-30 minutes. They are done when they brown slightly on the bottom, but are still very light on top. Remove the cookies from the oven and let them cool on a wire rack. Store in an airtight container.

TIP You should prepare the anise cookies 2-3 weeks before they will be eaten, so that they have plenty of time to become soft.



Cookie houses

By Monika Römer and Oliver Brachat

Makes 4-6

FOR THE COOKIES

200g (7oz) flour
80g (2½oz) ground hazelnuts
175g (6oz) butter, diced
75g (2½oz) icing sugar
2 tsp vanilla sugar
finely grated zest of 1 orange
1 free-range egg yolk

TO DECORATE

4 free-range egg whites
a pinch of salt
125g (4½oz) sugar
100g (3½oz) icing sugar
15g (½oz) starch
100g (3½oz) dark chocolate
300g (10½oz) marshmallows

- 1** The day before you bake the cookies, prepare the dough. Knead all the ingredients into a smooth dough. Form into a ball, wrap in clingfilm and place in the fridge for 2 hours.
- 2** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Separate the dough into multiple pieces, roll those pieces out thinly on a floured surface, then cut out rectangles. The number of rectangles you cut should be divisible by three. Place the rectangles on the baking sheet and bake in the oven for 6-8 minutes. Set aside to cool.
- 3** To decorate, beat the egg whites and salt in a bowl until frothy. Sprinkle in the sugar and continue mixing until the crystals have dissolved. Mix the icing sugar and starch, sift it into the egg white mixture and carefully fold in. Make a piping bag out of parchment paper; fill it with the egg white mixture and cut a hole at the tip. Squeeze some of the mixture onto the centre of a cookie and stick a marshmallow to it. Cover the top of the marshmallows with the egg white mixture, then use the egg white mixture to glue two cookies together on the long sides to form a roof and stick it to the marshmallow. Hold the pieces in place until the roof stays together on its own. Repeat the same procedure with the rest of the ingredients until there are no cookies left. Place the cookie houses on a lined baking sheet and let them dry at room temperature overnight. Cover the remaining egg white mixture and place it in the refrigerator.
- 4** The next day, melt the chocolate. Make two piping bags out of parchment paper; filling one with chocolate and the other with the remaining egg white mixture. Cut a hole at the tip of each one. Cover the roofs of the cookie houses with zigzag lines of glaze and create decorative snow and icicles from the egg white mixture (see photo). Finally, cut the marshmallows into quarters and stick them onto the houses as chimneys, using the egg white mixture as glue.



The recipes on pages 84-88 are taken from *Christmas Cookies: Dozens of Yuletide Treats for the Whole Family* by Monika Römer and Oliver Brachat, published by Skyhorse Publishing. (RRP £11.60).





Mini nut bars

By Monika Römer and Oliver Brachat

Makes 1 tray

FOR THE DOUGH

150g (5½oz) plain flour

60g (2¼oz) sugar

2 tsp vanilla sugar

1 free-range egg

60g (2¼oz) butter

FOR THE TOPPING

100g (3½oz) butter

100g (3½oz) sugar

2 tsp vanilla sugar

100g (3½oz) ground hazelnuts

100g (3½oz) chopped hazelnuts

200g (7oz) apricot jam

TO DECORATE

200g (7oz) dark chocolate

- 1** For the dough, mix the flour, sugar and vanilla sugar in a bowl. Add the egg and butter and knead into a smooth dough. Form into a ball, wrap in clingfilm and allow to rest for 30 minutes in the refrigerator. Meanwhile, for the topping, put the butter, sugar, vanilla sugar and 1 tbsp water in a saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring continuously. Stir in the nuts, take the pan off the stove and let it cool slightly.
- 2** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Roll out the dough on a floured work surface, then lay it down on a greased baking sheet.
- 3** Coat the dough with smooth, stirred apricot jam, then spread the nut mixture evenly on top. Place in the oven and bake for 30 minutes, until golden brown. Remove the baking sheet from the oven and cut the dessert while it is still warm, first into squares, then into triangles, with edges that are about 8cm (3in) long.
- 4** Melt the chocolate, dunk the corners of the nut bars in the glaze, then lay the cookies down on parchment paper to harden. After the chocolate is completely hard, store the nut bars in an airtight container.

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Festive drinks





Christmas gin cocktails

By Waitrose (www.waitrose.com)

FOR THE DOUBLE ORANGE G&T

**150ml (5fl oz) Tanqueray
London Dry Gin**

200ml (7fl oz) tonic water

**1 tsp essential Waitrose Seville
Orange Marmalade No Peel**

a twist of orange peel

ice

FOR THE CLASSIC MARTINI

40ml (1½fl oz) Tanqueray Gin

2 tsp dry vermouth

**2 pimento-stuffed green
olives in brine, drained**

1 For the double orange g&t, mix together all the ingredients (except the orange peel) together.

2 Add a few ice cubes and the orange peel to finish the drink.

3 For the classic martini, mix the gin and vermouth together. Place an olive on a cocktail stick and place in the glass.



Gold fever sparkling rum cocktail

By Waitrose (www.waitrose.com)

Serves 8-10

15g (½oz) fresh mint leaves
1 tbsp golden caster sugar
2 limes, chopped
1 red apple, cored and thinly sliced
3cm (1in) piece of fresh root ginger, thinly sliced
250ml (9fl oz) golden rum
750ml (27fl oz) Appletiser
ice cubes, to serve

- 1** Mix together all the ingredients in a chilled jug, add the ice cubes, then serve and enjoy.



Festive whisky cocktails

By Waitrose (www.waitrose.com)

FOR THE GINGER STORM – SERVES 1

2 tbsp Johnnie Walker Red Label Whisky
a dash of Angostura Bitters
200ml (7fl oz) Waitrose Fiery Ginger Beer

FOR THE WHISKY TWIST – SERVES 1

3 ice cubes
2 tbsp Johnnie Walker Red Label Whisky
2 tbsp orange liqueur, such as Grand Marnier or Cointreau
a twist of orange peel, to serve

- 1** For the ginger storm, pour the whisky into a champagne flute and add a dash of Angostura Bitters.
- 2** Top up with ginger beer and serve swiftly.
- 3** For the whisky twist, place the ice in a small tumbler and pour over the whisky and orange liqueur.
- 4** Muddle together, add a twist of orange peel and serve.

TIP Try adding 2 tbsp sweet vermouth in place of the Angostura Bitters.



Hazelnut hot chocolate

By Hannah Miles

Serves 2

100g (3½oz) milk chocolate, chopped

500ml (18fl oz) milk

1 heaped tbsp Nutella

4-7 tbsp hazelnut liqueur

200ml (7fl oz) double cream

1 tbsp finely chopped hazelnuts, toasted

1 Ferrero Rocher chocolate, halved (optional)

- 1 Place the chopped chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water; then heat gently over a low heat until melted.
- 2 Place the milk in a saucepan and bring gently to the boil. Add the melted chocolate and Nutella to the pan and simmer over a low heat, whisking all the time, until the chocolate is combined. Remove from the heat and add the hazelnut liqueur to taste. (Do not do this over the heat as the alcohol will evaporate.) Pour the hot chocolate into two cups.
- 3 Whip the cream to stiff peaks and add a spoonful to the top of each serving. Sprinkle with toasted hazelnuts. Add a Ferrero Rocher half to each serving, if desired. Serve immediately.



The recipes on pages 94-95 are taken from *Hot Chocolate* by Hannah Miles, photography by Steve Painter, published by Ryland Peters & Small. Readers can buy the book for the special price of £7.99 including p&p (RRP £9.99) by telephoning Macmillan Direct on 01256 302699 and quoting the reference GLR EB9.



White chocolate eggnog

By Hannah Miles

Serves 2

3 free-range egg yolks

2 tbsp caster sugar

500ml (18fl oz) milk

100g (3½oz) white chocolate, chopped

1 tsp ground cinnamon

a pinch of freshly grated nutmeg

1 tsp pure vanilla extract

4-5 tbsp rum (or more if you prefer!)

- 1 In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and sugar until thick and creamy. Set aside.
- 2 Place the milk and white chocolate in a saucepan with the cinnamon, nutmeg and vanilla, then heat over a low heat until the chocolate has melted, whisking all the time.
- 3 Bring the milk mixture gently to the boil, then pour over the egg yolk mixture, whisking all the time. (It is easiest to ask someone to whisk for you while you pour the hot milk in.) Return the mixture to the pan and simmer over a low heat until the drink starts to thicken, whisking continuously, then remove from the heat and stir in the rum.
- 4 Serve immediately in heat-proof glasses or alternatively you can cool, then chill and serve cold for equally delicious results.



Orange dream hot chocolate

By Hannah Miles

Serves 2

freshly squeezed juice of 2 oranges

2 tbsp caster sugar

500ml (18fl oz) milk

100g (3½oz) orange-flavoured dark chocolate (or plain dark chocolate), chopped

4 tbsp Grand Marnier or other orange liqueur (optional)

FOR THE MARSHMALLOWS

200ml (7oz) freshly squeezed orange juice

finely grated zest of 1 orange

4 tsp powdered gelatine

250g (9oz) caster sugar

2 tbsp liquid glucose

orange food colouring

icing sugar, sifted, for dusting

roasting pan lined with clingfilm or a silicone mat

- 1 Begin by making the marshmallows as they need to set before being used. Whisk together 5 tbsp orange juice and the powdered gelatine in a large mixing bowl. (For best results use a stand mixer because you will need to whisk the mixture a lot later.) Place the sugar, glucose and remaining orange juice and the zest into a heavy-based pan and simmer over a low heat until the sugar has dissolved. Turn up the heat and boil the mixture until it reaches hardball stage on a sugar thermometer (128°C). Turn the stand mixer on and, whisking, pour the hot syrup over the gelatine mixture in a steady stream. Whisk for about 10 minutes, until the mixture becomes white, thick and meringue-like. Whisk in a few drops of orange food colouring.
- 2 Dust a lined roasting tin with a thin layer of icing sugar. Pour the marshmallow mixture into the tin. Dust the top with more icing sugar and leave to set for 2 hours in the refrigerator.
- 3 Turn the marshmallow out onto a flat surface and gently remove the clingfilm. Dust with more icing sugar. Cut the marshmallow into squares. Store in an airtight container for up to 1 week.
- 4 For the hot chocolate, simmer the orange juice and sugar in a saucepan over a low heat until the sugar has melted and you have a sticky syrup. Add the milk and chocolate, then heat gently until the chocolate has melted, whisking all the time. Remove from the heat and add the Grand Marnier, if using. Stir, then pour into cups. Top with a few orange marshmallows.



Christmas punch

By Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk)

Serves 10-12

2 oranges, sliced

2 limes, sliced

4 ltrs (6pts) cranberry juice

500ml (18fl oz) orange juice, with bits

1 ltr (1¾pts) cloudy lemonade

TO SERVE

ice

- 1 Add the sliced orange and lime to a drinks dispenser.
- 2 Pour in the remaining ingredients, adding a quantity of each in turn so they mix well.
- 3 Add the ice and chill until needed.

TIP Making ice cubes with punch rather than water will stop the drink from diluting.



Champagne velvet

By Seasonal Berries (www.seasonalberries.co.uk)

Serves 6

175g (6oz) blackberries

50g (2oz) plus 1 tbsp caster sugar

6 tbsp brandy

1 bottle of chilled Champagne or sparkling wine

- 1 Reserve six of the blackberries for decoration. Place the remaining blackberries with 50g (2oz) caster sugar in a saucepan. Heat gently until the sugar has dissolved, then simmer for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally until the sauce has thickened slightly and has become syrupy.
- 2 Sieve the blackberry syrup over a bowl, gently pressing with the back of a spoon. Discard the fruit pulp. Chill the syrup.
- 3 Place a little of the syrup on a saucer and the remaining caster sugar on another saucer. Dip the rim of each of the Champagne flutes first in the blackberry syrup, then in the caster sugar.
- 4 Blend the brandy with the remaining blackberry syrup and pour a couple of tablespoons into the flutes. Top with the chilled Champagne or sparkling wine. Skewer a blackberry with a cocktail stick and place on top of each glass. Serve immediately.

Family

TREATS



Brownie mountain

Makes 24

FOR THE BROWNIES

- 400g (14oz) dark chocolate
- 350g (12oz) butter
- 650g (1lb 7oz) caster sugar
- 260g (9oz) plain flour
- 6 free-range eggs
- 150g (5oz) dark chocolate, cut into chunks
- 100g (3½oz) dried cranberries
- grated zest of 6 oranges
- 60g (2oz) soft golden sugar pearls

FOR THE SANTAS

- medium sized strawberries
- whipping cream
- icing sugar
- chocolate covered popping candy or chocolate sprinkles
- FOR THE TREES**
- 6 large strawberries
- 200g (7oz) Wilton green candy coating pieces – or use white chocolate coloured with natural green food colouring
- small sweets and sprinkles, to decorate

TO MAKE THE BROWNIES

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line a 23x33cm (9x13in) baking pan with baking parchment. (If not available two smaller tins are just as good.)
- 2 Break up the chocolate and cube the butter, putting them into a large bowl over a pan of simmering water. Mix occasionally with a wooden spoon until they have melted and become smooth.
- 3 Remove from the heat and add the sugar, stirring well – the mixture will look sandy, this is normal. Add the flour gradually and stir until well combined.
- 4 Break the eggs into a jug and beat until well mixed up. Gradually add this to the chocolate mixture.
- 5 Mix in the chocolate chunks, cranberries, orange zest and 40g (1½oz) of the golden pearls. Pour the mixture into the baking pan and spread out well, ensuring it is no deeper than 3cm (1¼in). Sprinkle the remaining palmful of golden pearls over the top of the brownie mixture.
- 6 Bake for between 30-35 minutes until flaky on the top, but moist inside, then cool on a wire rack before cutting.

FOR THE STRAWBERRY SANTAS

- 1 Pour the cream and icing sugar to taste into a cold bowl and whip either by hand or by using a mixer until when lifting the whisk out of the bowl you see firm peaks.
- 2 Trim the bottom of the strawberries to give your Santa a sturdy base, then cut the tip off about a third of the way down the strawberry. The tip will be Santa's hat and the base his body.
- 3 Using a large star shaped nozzle, pipe some cream onto the top of Santa's body. The cream should cover the inside of the strawberry and be about 1cm (½in) tall. (You may need to increase or decrease this amount of cream depending on the size of your strawberries.)
- 4 Place the tip of the strawberry on top of the cream you have just piped, then replace the piping bags star nozzle with a small writing nozzle and pipe a dot on top of the strawberry tip to make the bobble on Santa's hat. Pipe small dots down the front of his body for the buttons on his coat.
- 5 Use small pieces of chocolate popping candy for Santa's eyes.
- 6 You can use these adorable Santas to decorate your cakes and puddings also. These should last an hour, maybe two depending on how hot the room is.

FOR THE STRAWBERRY CHRISTMAS TREES

- 1 Wash and thoroughly dry the strawberries. (If the strawberries are damp the coating/chocolate will not stick, so it is very important for them to be absolutely dry.)
- 2 Melt the candy coating in a bowl over a pan of lightly simmering water. When the coating is smooth, remove from the heat and insert a paper lolly stick or cocktail stick near to the stalk. This is to use as a stand while your strawberries set. Holding the strawberry by the stalk, spoon candy coating over the strawberry until it is covered, apart from the stalk area. Use a cocktail stick or fork to dab at the coating, giving it the desired tree-like texture.
- 3 Add your decorations. Candy coating sets rather quickly at room temperature once applied, so if you find it sets before you have finished adding decorations, use a little coating from the bowl as an adhesive, using a cocktail stick to apply.
- 4 Stand your strawberries to set in either a block of polystyrene or a small box turned upside down with holes in. If you have used white chocolate as a coating you will need to put your strawberries in the fridge to set.
- 5 Have fun placing your strawberries on either our chocolate brownie mountain, Christmas cupcakes, serving with Christmas desserts or just enjoying by themselves. The strawberries will last up to 24 hours.

TIP If you want to use the spare orange juice for a festive adults only drink, you can bring it to a simmer with two shots of Pimms Winter, a cinnamon stick and a star anise, then pour into tall glasses through a strainer (to get rid of the pith) and top up with lemonade to taste. It is rather good and gently warming.





St Clements cake pops

Makes 30

FOR THE CAKE

100g (3½oz) butter, softened

100g (3½oz) caster sugar

2 medium free-range eggs

100g (3½oz) self-raising flour

grated zest of ½ an orange

grated zest of 1 lemon

FOR THE FROSTING

100g (3½oz) butter, softened

200g (7oz) icing sugar, sifted

zest of ½ an orange

TO DECORATE

cake pop sticks

150g (5oz) white chocolate

**150g (5oz) orange chocolate buttons
citrus sprinkles**

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Prepare a 20cm (8in) sandwich tin – grease well and line the base with baking paper.
- 2** Cream together the softened butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, beat well to combine. Sift in the flour and fold in using a spatula or metal spoon. Stir through the orange and lemon zest.
- 3** Place the batter in the prepared tin and bake in the oven for 25 minutes, until golden brown and well risen. Transfer to a wire rack and allow to cool completely. Once fully cooled, crumble the cake into fine crumbs using your fingertips and set to one side.

- 4** For the frosting, beat the butter until very soft, add the sifted icing sugar and orange zest and beat well until it has an even consistency. Add the frosting to the cake crumbs and work together until the frosting is evenly distributed and the consistency is of moist crumbs.
- 5** Roll the mixture into 2.5cm (1in) balls using your hands. Set on a tray and chill in the fridge for an hour or until firm.
- 6** To decorate, begin with the white chocolate, melting gently over a pan of boiling water. Once melted, remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly for 10 minutes. Using half the chilled cake balls, take a cake pop stick and dip the very end into the white chocolate. Insert the stick into the base of the cake ball, pushing it carefully three-quarters of the way through. Repeat until all the balls are on sticks. Chill for 15 minutes.
- 7** Dip the cake pops into the melted white chocolate and turn to coat. Remove from the chocolate and allow the excess to drain off and back into the bowl. Once the excess has fallen away, set the sticks through the holes of a wire cooling rack or an upturned colander and allow the chocolate to begin to set. Just as the chocolate coating is starting to set, sprinkle the pops with citrus sprinkles. Repeat the process with the remaining cake pop balls, this time coating in melted orange chocolate.

TIP If the cake balls crack as you insert the sticks they are too firm, allow to warm a little for 10 minutes before proceeding.



Christmas pudding whoopie pies

Makes 20

FOR THE WHOOPIES

- 85g (3oz) butter, softened
- 115g (4oz) caster sugar
- 1 large free-range egg
- 170g (6oz) self-raising flour, sifted
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 25g (1oz) cocoa powder
- 110g (4oz) natural live yoghurt

FOR THE BUTTERCREAM

- 140g (5oz) butter, softened
- 250g (9oz) icing sugar
- 4 tbsp cocoa powder
- 1 tbsp milk

FOR THE DECORATION AND ICING

- green and red ready-to-roll fondant icing
- 100g (3½oz) icing sugar, sifted
- 1-2 tbsp warm water

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4, then line two large baking trays with baking paper.
- 2 For the whoopies, cream together the butter and sugar in a large bowl until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in the egg. Fold in the flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and cocoa using a metal spoon. Gently stir in the yoghurt until well combined.
- 3 Place some of the mixture into a piping bag fitted with a 1¼cm (¾in) round nozzle and pipe mounds approximately 3cm (1¼in) diameter onto the baking trays spaced about 3cm (1¼in) apart. Bake in the oven for 10 minutes until firm to the touch. Leave to cool slightly on the baking trays before transferring to a cooling rack. You won't fit all the whoopies on the baking trays at once, so bake in batches until all the mixture is used up – you need to pipe 40 mounds in total.
- 4 For the buttercream, beat the butter until smooth and soft then gradually stir in the icing sugar and cocoa. Beat for 2-3 minutes until it is of a soft and spreadable consistency – add the milk if necessary. Spread the cream over the flat side of half the whoopies, then sandwich the remaining whoopies on top.
- 5 Roll out the green fondant icing to approximately 3mm in thickness, then cut out 20 holly leaves using a cutter. Break off tiny pieces of red fondant icing and roll into balls to create the holly berries.
- 6 For the topping, mix the icing sugar with 1 tbsp of warm water to create a thick spreadable consistency. Gradually add the remaining water if the icing is too thick. Drop a tsp of icing on top of each whoopie and spread out a little towards the edges. Allow to set slightly, then decorate with the fondant holly leaves and berries.



Festive gingerbread

By Waitrose (www.waitrose.com)

Makes 25

FOR THE GINGERBREAD

125g (4½oz) essential Waitrose Unsalted Dairy Butter

100g (3½oz) dark brown muscovado sugar

4 tbsp golden syrup

325g (11½oz) plain flour, plus extra for dusting

1 tsp bicarbonate of soda

2 tsp ground ginger

5 tbsp icing sugar

3 tbsp Cooks' Homebaking Sprinkles, such as White Chocolate Stars, Silver Balls, Pearly 100s & 1000s

- 1** Preheat the oven to 170°C/Gas Mark 3. Line two large baking trays with baking parchment. Melt the butter, sugar and syrup together in a medium saucepan, stirring occasionally, then remove from the heat.
- 2** Sieve the flour, bicarbonate of soda and ginger into a bowl, then stir the melted ingredients into the dry ingredients to make a stiff dough. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and roll to a thickness of about 5mm (¼in).
- 3** Stamp shapes out of the dough using Waitrose Cooking Christmas Cookie Cutters or cut round festive templates. Place the shapes onto the lined baking trays and bake, in batches, for 9-10 minutes until golden brown.
- 4** Remove from the oven. While still warm, use a skewer or chopstick to make any holes for hanging the biscuits with ribbon or string. Leave to cool completely on a wire rack.
- 5** Mix together the icing sugar with a splash of water to make thick icing, then drizzle or pipe over the biscuits and decorate with sprinkles. The gingerbread biscuits can be stored in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.



Rudolph's fairy cakes with mincemeat

By Waitrose (www.waitrose.com)

Makes 16

FOR THE CAKES

125g (4½oz) unsalted butter, softened

75g (2¾oz) caster sugar

2 large free-range eggs, beaten

125g (4½oz) self-raising flour

half a 410g (14½oz) jar of Waitrose Mincemeat

1 tsp baking powder

300g (10½oz) pot of SuperCook Easy Ice

100g (3½oz) tub of Waitrose Glacé Fruits

Provençale cherries

- 1** Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5. Divide 16 paper cases between two bun tins.
- 2** Using an electric whisk, beat the butter and sugar until pale and creamy, then whisk in the egg a little at a time.
- 3** Fold in the flour, mincemeat and baking powder. Divide the mixture between the cases and bake for 15-20 minutes until golden and firm. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.
- 4** Prepare the icing according to pack instructions, then spoon over the cakes, smoothing it with a round-bladed knife. Top each with a cherry. These cakes will keep in an airtight container for 3-4 days.

TIP If the cake mixture starts to curdle while beating in the eggs, add a little flour.



This recipe is taken from *The American Cookbook* by Caroline Bretherton and Elena Rosemond-Hoerr, published by DK, RRP £16.99

Cinnamon churros with chocolate chilli sauce

By Caroline Bretherton and Elena Rosemond-Hoerr

Makes 20

FOR THE CHURROS

25g (1oz) unsalted butter

200g (7oz) plain flour

50g (1½oz) caster sugar

1 tsp baking powder

1 litre (1¾pt) peanut or sunflower oil

1 tsp ground cinnamon

FOR THE SAUCE

50g (1½oz) dark chocolate, broken into pieces

150ml (5fl oz) double cream

1 tbsp caster sugar

1 tbsp unsalted butter

a pinch of salt

¼ tsp chilli powder or cayenne pepper, to taste

- 1 Measure 200ml (7fl oz) boiling water into a jug. Add the butter and stir until it melts. Sift together the flour, half the sugar and the baking powder into a bowl. Make a well in the centre and slowly pour in the hot butter liquid, beating continuously, until you have a thick paste – you may not need all the liquid. Leave the mixture to cool and rest for 5 minutes.
- 2 Pour the oil into a large, heavy-based saucepan or deep-fat fryer to a depth of at least 10cm (4in) and heat it to 190°C. Keep the correct-sized saucepan lid nearby and never leave the hot oil unattended. Regulate the temperature, making sure it remains even, or the churros will burn.
- 3 Place the cooled mixture into a piping bag fitted with a 2cm (¾in) star-shaped nozzle. Pipe 7cm (2¾in) lengths of the dough directly into the hot oil, using a pair of scissors to snip off the ends. Do not crowd the pan, or the temperature of the oil will go down. Cook the churros for 1-2 minutes on each side, turning them when they are golden brown. When done, remove the churros from the oil with a slotted spoon and drain on kitchen paper. Turn off the heat.
- 4 Mix the remaining sugar and the cinnamon together on a plate and toss the churros in the mixture while still hot. Leave to cool for 5-10 minutes before serving while still warm.
- 5 For the chocolate chilli sauce, put the chocolate, cream, sugar and butter in a medium, heatproof bowl over a saucepan of barely simmering water. Heat the mixture, stirring constantly, for 3-4 minutes until the chocolate melts and the sauce amalgamates and thickens.
- 6 Take the sauce off the heat and add a pinch of salt. Add the chilli powder or cayenne pepper to taste, a pinch at a time, and taste as you add it. The sauce will not immediately appear hot or spicy; the right amount of spice will be reached when it leaves a slow heat in your mouth, but does not overwhelm you. Transfer to a bowl and serve immediately with your freshly made churros.

Birdseed brittle

By Shauna Sever

FOR THE BRITTLE

350g (12oz) pure cane sugar

84g (3oz) brown rice syrup

115ml (4fl oz) water

1 tsp fine sea salt

30g (1oz) pepitas (raw pumpkin seeds)

30g (1oz) roasted salted or unsalted sunflower seeds

1 tsp white sesame seeds

1 tsp chia seeds or black sesame seeds

57g (2oz) unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

½ tsp pure vanilla extract

1 tsp bicarbonate of soda

- 1** Line a large baking sheet with a silicone baking mat or line it with parchment and spray it with non-stick cooking spray.
- 2** In a medium saucepan set over medium-high heat, combine the sugar, brown rice syrup, water and salt. Stir gently until the syrup begins to boil. Clip a candy thermometer onto the side of the pan. Cook the syrup, stirring occasionally, until it reaches 143°C.
- 3** While the syrup is boiling, in a small bowl, mix together the pepitas, sunflower seeds, white sesame seeds and chia or black sesame seeds.
- 4** When the syrup reaches 143°C, remove the pan from the heat. Stir in the butter and vanilla extract. Once the butter has melted, stir in the bicarbonate of soda – the mixture will foam up and bubble. Immediately spread the mixture out onto the prepared baking sheet.
- 5** Spread the candy into a rough rectangle about 20x25cm (8x10in) in size. Sprinkle the seeds over the top. When the candy is still warm and pliable, but cool enough to touch, use your palms to press the seeds into the surface of the brittle. Let cool completely before breaking the brittle into charmingly irregular hunks.

TIP These seed amounts are pretty tiny – I tend to buy my seeds in bulk at natural food stores, so I can get smaller amounts as needed. Use whatever combination of seeds you like.



This recipe is taken from *Real Sweet* by Shauna Sever, published by HarperCollins, RRP £16.99.





Hot cocoa reindeer treats

By Ashley Fox Whipple

Makes about 6

FOR THE REINDEER

6 pretzel twists

15 pretzel sticks

2 tbsp margarine

140g (5oz) mini marshmallows

28g (1oz) packet of hot cocoa mix

75g (2½oz) chocolate crisp rice cereal

115g (4oz) chocolate almond bark

small candies for eyes and nose

- 1 Use a serrated knife to cut the pretzel twists in half for the antlers. Break pretzel sticks in half for legs and necks. Set aside.
- 2 Melt the margarine over a low heat in a saucepan. Add the marshmallows and stir occasionally until completely melted. Stir in the cocoa powder. Remove from the heat.

- 3 Add the chocolate crisp rice cereal and stir until completely covered with marshmallow. As soon as the mixture is cool enough to handle, begin to form the reindeer. For each, sculpt a small round ball for the head and a larger, more elongated shape for the body.
- 4 Using a microwave-safe dish, heat almond bark in the microwave in 30 second increments until completely melted, stirring between each heating. (Use high power level for the first heating and switch to half power for subsequent heatings.) Gently press the pretzel antlers into each side of the heads. Use melted almond bark to affix the pretzel antlers and candy eyes and noses.
- 5 Insert four of the halved pretzel sticks into a reindeer body for legs and stand the body up. Insert one of the halved sticks into the front of the body and gently slide the head onto it, leaving some of the pretzel visible. If the head is unsteady, secure the pretzel to the body and head with melted almond bark. Repeat for the rest of the reindeer. Store in an airtight container and serve within 24 hours.



This recipe and the reindeer treats on page 106 are taken from *Super Cute Crispy Treats* by Ashley Fox Whipple, published by Race Point, RRP £12.99.

Peppermint white chocolate crispy treats

By Ashley Fox Whipple

Makes 24

FOR THE SQUARES

3 tbsp margarine

280g (10oz) bag of mini marshmallows

175g (6oz) white chocolate chips

1 tsp peppermint extract

150g (5oz) crisp rice cereal

180g (6oz) peppermint baking pieces or crushed candy cane

55g (2oz) almond bark or white chocolate

- 1 Melt the margarine over a low heat in a saucepan. Add marshmallows and stir. Let the marshmallows melt completely, stirring occasionally. Stir in the white chocolate chips and peppermint extract until the chips are completely incorporated. Remove from the heat.
- 2 Pour in the rice cereal and stir until covered with marshmallow. Fold in 120g (4oz) of the peppermint pieces. Turn out the mixture into a 22x33cm (9x13in) baking dish that has been well coated with non-stick cooking spray. Push the mixture down evenly with greased hands or a spatula.
- 3 Using a microwave-safe dish, heat the almond bark in the microwave in 30 second increments until completely melted, stirring between each heating. (Use high power level for the first heating and switch to half power for subsequent heatings.) Drizzle over the treat mixture. Next, sprinkle the remaining 60g (2oz) of peppermint pieces over the treat mixture.
- 4 Store in an airtight container and serve within 24 hours. Cut into 5cm (2in) squares shortly before serving.



Gingerbread biscuits

By Holland & Barrett (www.hollandandbarrett.com)

Makes 18-20

FOR THE BISCUITS

75g (2¾oz) butter

50g (1¾oz) dark muscovado sugar

2 tbsp golden syrup

175g (6oz) self-raising flour

1 tsp ground ginger

½ tsp ground cinnamon

FOR THE ICING

50g (1¾oz) icing sugar

a splash of water

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4.
- 2 In a small saucepan, melt the butter, sugar and golden syrup together gently.
- 3 Sift the flour and spices into a bowl with a small pinch of salt and then stir in the melted butter mixture. Mix well until you have a stiff dough.
- 4 Allow the dough to cool and then roll out on a floured surface until it is about 5mm (¼in) in height. Using a gingerbread man cutter, cut out as many gingerbread men as you can and transfer them to a lined baking tray.
- 5 Bake in the oven for 8-10 minutes until firm and golden. Allow to cool while you make the icing.
- 6 Combine the icing sugar with a very small amount of water, gradually mixing until you have a stiff icing that runs but holds its shape when drizzled. Fill a piping bag with a small nozzle, followed by the icing and pipe decorations onto your biscuits. Allow them to set and serve.



Almond thins

By Lucy Cufflin

Makes about 30 thins

FOR THE THINS

60g (2oz) butter

25g (1oz) water

180g (6oz) Demerara sugar

80g (3oz) flaked almonds

3g (1/8oz) ground cinnamon

5g (1/4oz) vanilla extract

150g (5oz) plain flour

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line a loaf tin with a double thickness of clingfilm.
- 2 Melt the butter, water and sugar together in a saucepan – do not boil.
- 3 Add the almonds, cinnamon, vanilla and flour – stir well and mix into a soft dough.
- 4 Press the dough into the tin, flattening the top and cover with the clingfilm.
- 5 Pop the tin into the freezer for at least 20 minutes or until firm enough to slice very thinly with a sharp knife. Slice as thinly and evenly as you can. Cut off as many biscuits as you want to bake and return the rest to the freezer for another day. Place the biscuits on baking sheets lined with baking paper.
- 6 Bake for 10 minutes, or until golden brown all over – they will crisp up as they cool. Cool on the sheets for a little while, then slide the paper onto wire racks to cool completely. Try not to eat them all before it's time to serve them – oh so easy to do! They are perfect with ice cream. Store any leftover ones in an airtight container.



Mincemeat twigs

By Lucy Cufflin

Makes 10 twigs

FOR THE TWIGS

1 packet of 10 sheets of filo pastry

1/2 a 411g (14oz) jar of good mincemeat

icing sugar, for dusting

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Line a baking sheet with baking paper.
- 2 Lay a sheet of filo pastry onto a clean work surface, making sure the remaining sheets are covered or they will dry out while you are working.
- 3 You are going to spread a narrow strip of mincemeat on the filo across the shorter width of the pastry. Spoon 2 tsp of mincemeat onto the pastry at one short end, 2cm (3/4in) in from the edge, and drag it in a thin line, no wider than the width of the dried fruit in the mincemeat, from one side to the other across the pastry, stopping 2cm (3/4in) before you reach the other edge.
- 4 Fold the ends over and then roll as tightly as you can so that you have a long, thin twig-shaped filo parcel with the mincemeat trapped inside. Transfer to the prepared baking sheet and repeat with the other filo sheets and mincemeat.
- 5 Dust very generously with icing sugar and bake for 15 minutes or until the filo is crispy and golden and the sugar browned. Transfer to a wire rack to cool. Dust with more icing sugar to serve. These twigs are great replacements for the more usual mince pies and are very quick and simple to prepare.

Chestnut cups

By Lucy Cufflin

Makes 20 petit fours-sized cups

300g (10½oz) dark chocolate

200g (7oz) sweetened chestnut purée

200g (7oz) double cream

dash of liqueur (optional)

- 1 Place 20 mini (petit four) cake cases on a baking tray.
- 2 Melt the chocolate in a bowl over a saucepan of gently simmering water and, when it is melted, remove it from the heat. Transfer 100g (3½oz) to a small bowl and set aside to cool but not set again.
- 3 Dip a pastry brush in the remaining chocolate, brush a light film on the inside of the paper case, invert them and leave to set. Chill the cases, then repeat, so that you have a double layer of chocolate.
- 4 Meanwhile, whisk the sweetened chestnut purée with the cream (and liqueur if using) until thick, then add the reserved 100g (3½oz) cooled melted chocolate.
- 5 When the chocolate cups are solid, remove the cases if you wish and then pipe or spoon the chestnut cream into them.
- 6 Store for up to 3 days in the fridge.

TIP This chestnut cream also makes a fabulous cake filling.



The recipes on pages 108-109 and the biscotti on page 110 are taken from *Lucy's Bakes* by Lucy Cufflin, photography by Jacqui Melville, published by Hardie Grant, RRP £20.



Jewelled biscotti

By Lucy Cufflin

Makes about 60 thin-cut biscotti

FOR THE BISCOTTI

100g (3½oz) mixed coloured glacé cherries	finely grated zest of 2 oranges
250g (9oz) plain flour	juice of 1 orange
10g (½oz) baking powder	3g (⅓oz) ground cinnamon
200g (7oz) caster sugar	150g (5oz) hazelnuts, chopped
	2 free-range eggs

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line a baking sheet with baking paper.
- 2 Chop the glacé cherries finely and put into a bowl with all of the other ingredients. Mix together with a spoon or your hands until you have a soft dough.
- 3 Divide the mixture in half and form into soft logs (wet hands might help here) and place them side by side on the baking sheet – do not flatten as this will happen during cooking.
- 4 Bake for 25 minutes until risen and dark golden brown. It is important to leave this to get completely cold before slicing – it's best left overnight. You can bake up to this point and freeze this log and bake again another day.
- 5 Once cold and ready to second-bake, preheat the oven to 150°C/Gas Mark 2. Use a large bread knife and slice the logs very thinly – you should get about 30 from each log – and lay them onto baking sheets lined with baking paper.
- 6 Cook again for 15-20 minutes or until the biscotti are only just golden brown – do not overcook them – you are really just drying them out here.

TIP Try lemon zest instead of orange and dried berries and pumpkin seeds in place of the glacé cherries.



Stained glass biscuits

By Liz Franklin

Makes 12-15

FOR THE BISCUITS

175g (6oz) plain flour	½ tsp mixed spice
50g (1½oz) butter, softened	2 tbsp honey
50g (1½oz) soft brown sugar	1 free-range egg yolk
½ tsp bicarbonate of soda	300g (10½oz) coloured boiled sweets, crushed
1 tsp ground ginger	

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4.
- 2 Put the flour into a large mixing bowl and rub in the butter until it resembles fine breadcrumbs. Add the sugar and mix well. Stir in the bicarbonate of soda, ground ginger and mixed spice. Add the honey and egg yolk and bring the mixture together to form a smooth dough.
- 3 On a clean, lightly floured work surface, roll the dough out into a large rectangle with a thickness of about 3mm. Cut out cookies using the cutter of your choice, arrange the cookies on two baking sheets lined with baking parchment and then cut out shapes from the centre of each cookie. Bring the dough cut out of the centre together with any scraps and roll out again to cut as many cookies out of the dough as possible.
- 4 Fill the centre of each cookie with some crushed boiled sweets and bake in the oven for about 10 minutes, until the cookies are golden and firm and the boiled sweets have melted and formed a stained glass window effect.
- 5 Remove from the oven and leave for 10 minutes or so to cool, before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely. Leave to set, store between layers of baking parchment in an airtight container or cookie jar and eat within 3 days. If using as tree decorations, thread a string through the top and hang up – but better not to eat them once they've been hung for a while.



Coconut snowballs

By Liz Franklin

Makes 25-30

FOR THE BISCUITS

100g (3½oz) butter, softened

150g (5oz) caster sugar

1 free-range egg

200g (7oz) plain flour

1 tsp baking powder

finely grated zest of 1 orange

FOR THE COCONUT COATING

100g (3½oz) seedless orange marmalade

150g (5oz) desiccated coconut

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4.
- 2** Beat the butter and sugar together in a large mixing bowl until smooth. Add the egg and continue to beat until fully incorporated. Stir in the flour, baking powder and orange zest and bring the mixture together to form a stiff dough.
- 3** Roll the mixture into small balls the size of walnuts and lay on two baking sheets lined with baking parchment, leaving a little space for spreading between each one. Pat down lightly for a flat finish or leave ball-shaped for a snowball bite.
- 4** Bake in the oven for 10 minutes, until light golden and firm.
- 5** Leave on the baking sheet for 5 minutes or so to cool slightly, and then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
- 6** Put the coconut in a wide, shallow dish and set aside.
- 7** When the snowballs are cold, gently warm the marmalade in a small saucepan set over a low heat and brush it over the entire surface of the snowballs. Roll in the coconut to coat and leave to set. Store in an airtight container or cookie jar and eat within one week.



Pistachio Christmas trees

By Liz Franklin

Makes 20-25

FOR THE TREES

125g (4½oz) butter

125g (4½oz) caster sugar

1 whole free-range egg

250g (9oz) plain flour

1 free-range egg white, lightly beaten

100g (3½oz) pistachios, finely chopped

icing sugar, for dusting (optional)

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4.
- 2** Beat the butter and sugar together in a large mixing bowl until smooth. Add the whole egg and beat until fully incorporated. Stir in the flour and bring the mixture together to make a soft, but not sticky dough. Wrap in clingfilm and chill in the fridge for 30 minutes.
- 3** On a clean, lightly floured work surface, roll the dough out into a large rectangle about 3-4mm (¼in) thick. Use Christmas tree cookie cutters of varying sizes to cut out cookies. Lay them on two baking sheets lined with baking parchment, leaving a little space for spreading between each one. Bring the trimmed dough together and roll out again to cut as many cookies out of the dough as possible. Arrange on the baking sheets with the other cookies.
- 4** Brush the top of each cookie with the lightly beaten egg white, leaving the trunk of the tree without the egg white wash. Scatter the chopped pistachios over the branch part of the tree to decorate.
- 5** Bake in the oven for 10-15 minutes, until golden and firm. Leave to cool on the baking sheets for 5 minutes or so, before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.
- 6** I like to dust these with icing sugar to emulate fresh snow. Store between layers of baking parchment in an airtight container or cookie jar and eat within 3 days.

Spiced blueberry panettone

By Seasonal Berries (www.seasonalberries.co.uk)

Makes 8

FOR THE PANETTONE

200g (7oz) unsalted butter, diced plus 15g (½oz)

500g (1lb 2oz) white bread flour

½ tsp salt

100g (4oz) caster sugar

1 tsp ground cinnamon

finely grated zest of 1 orange

finely grated zest of 1 lemon

4 tsp easy blend dried yeast

200ml (7fl oz) semi-skimmed milk

3 medium free-range eggs

1 tsp vanilla extract

150g (5oz) ready diced mixed candied peel

2 tbsp ready chopped glacé ginger

150g (5oz) blueberries

- 1** Melt 200g (7oz) of the butter gently in a saucepan, then take off the heat and leave until it feels warm to a fingertip.
- 2** Add the bread flour, salt, sugar, cinnamon and fruit zests to the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a dough hook, or a large bowl. Add the yeast and mix together.
- 3** Warm the milk in a second saucepan until it feels just warm to a fingertip. Beat the eggs and vanilla together in a bowl, then gradually beat in the warm milk. Gradually mix into the dry flour mix and beat for 4-5 minutes. If you don't have an electric mixer, use a wooden spoon.
- 4** Gradually trickle in the warm melted butter, beating well after each addition until the mixture is a smooth, glossy and elastic batter. Cover the bowl with a clean tea cloth or clingfilm and leave in a warm place for 1 hour or until doubled in size.
- 5** Meanwhile, brush the inside of washed and recycled cans with a little oil, then line the bases with a circle of non-stick baking paper and the sides with a strip of paper that stands a little above the tins.
- 6** Knock the yeast batter back by beating for 1-2 minutes, then stir in the candied fruit and ginger. Add the blueberries and gently stir together so that you don't break them up. Divide between the lined tins. Cover the tops with a clean tea cloth, then leave in a warm place for 1 hour or until the batter almost reaches the tops of the tin.
- 7** Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5. Remove the cloth from the top of the breads. Bake for 30-35 minutes until a deep brown and the bread sounds hollow when the tops are tapped. Take out of the oven, brush the tops with the remaining butter; then cool for a few minutes.
- 8** Loosen the edges of the panettone, turn out and leave to cool on their sides on a wire rack.
- 9** When cold, wrap in clean paper and return to the washed and decorated tins then wrap in cellophane, tie with ribbon and add labels. These can be kept up to 4 days.

TIP As these breads contain a generous amount of butter and sugar, you will find that they take longer to rise than plainer breads. Make sure that the liquid is warm to your little finger – too hot and you will kill the yeast, too cool and it will take ages to activate the yeast and start the rising process.





Snowmen macaroons

Makes 12-15

200g (7oz) ground almonds

140g (5oz) icing sugar

3 large free-range egg whites

a pinch of salt

40g (1½oz) caster sugar

blue food colouring paste

FOR THE FILLING

225ml (8fl oz) milk

3 free-range egg yolks

50g (1¾oz) sugar

20g (¾oz) cornflour

1½ tbsp butter

½ tsp vanilla extract

TO DECORATE

small coloured sweets

1 tube of black icing gel

1 tube of white icing gel

- 1 Line two baking trays with non-stick baking paper.
- 2 Grind the almonds and icing sugar in a food processor until very fine.
- 3 Whisk the egg whites with the salt until soft peaks form. Gradually whisk in the caster sugar until the mixture is thick and glossy. Fold the almond and icing sugar mixture into the meringue and mix well.
- 4 Divide the mixture into two separate bowls and colour one bowl blue. Spoon into two separate piping bags. Pipe the body of the snowmen on the baking trays, then pipe small rounds for the heads at the top of the bodies. Carefully tap the tray on a hard surface to eliminate air bubbles. Leave to rest at room temperature for 15-30 minutes.
- 5 Preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas Mark 3.
- 6 Bake for about 15 minutes until firm. Cool on the baking trays for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 7 For the filling, heat the milk to a boil in a pan, then set aside to cool slightly. Whisk together the egg yolks, sugar and cornflour. Gradually whisk in the hot milk. Return to the pan and bring to a boil, whisking vigorously for 1-2 minutes. Stir in the butter and vanilla. Cover the surface directly with clingfilm and leave to cool completely.
- 8 Sandwich the snowmen together in pairs with the filling. Attach the coloured sweets with a dab of the filling, as in the photo. Pipe details with the black and white gels and leave to set.



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